

FROM

THE HEART OF EUROPE

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Preface

This book, except for its final pages, was written in Europe, between July and December 1947. It makes no pretence of giving a full report on any of the countries which I visited. I am not a trained journalist, and I went to Europe primarily because I had been invited to lecture on American literature by Charles University in Prague, and at the Salzburg Seminar. This is less a travel book than a journal of opinions, a record of what I thought about during half a year abroad. It is as much about America as about Europe. Although I was in France and England for a few weeks, I did not describe my impressions of those countries, since I had little to add to what has already been said. Instead I put down an account of my views on education and politics—perhaps in too personal terms. But a journal inevitably becomes a passage of autobiography. It possesses value only to the extent that it becomes representative also of what others are thinking.

The history of our time is moving with inexorable speed, and much that I experienced in Prague already belongs to the past. The tension generated between the Truman Doctrine and the Cominform produced for Czechoslovakia more sudden and drastic effects even than I had feared. So far as my personal observations there were true to the Czech character, they will remain true. National characters, despite the headlines, do not change overnight. And the necessity for Americans and Europeans to reach beyond the barriers of their political differences to human and cultural understanding becomes ever more urgent.

F. O. M.

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For
My Friends at Salzburg and Prague

Salzburg:

July and August

(| *Schloss Leopoldskron, Salzburg*. I want to write about some of the things it means to be an American today. That is the chief thing I came to Europe to think about.

The starting point for these thoughts was really in California, or rather in the air above the desert, flying back from visiting my father, when I began talking with the man in the seat beside me. He was dark, and I thought him probably Mexican, but he turned out to be French—a correspondent for *Paris Soir*, who had just been on an assignment in Japan. He had known the Orient also before the war, and spoke Japanese. The war had found him working for his paper in Sweden, and his wife was Swedish. His mastery of English, or rather, of colloquial American, was complete, though he had never before been in either England or America.

The most striking thing about him was that with all his range of travel throughout the world, America was the magnet that attracted him. The Orient was just an interlude: what he wanted was New York. He had young children, and he wanted them to be educated in America. That astonished me. Didn't he know that the American school system, compared with his own, was wasteful of years, that American children learned far less in more time? Yes, but he could give them that discipline at home, and he had decided that something was seriously lacking in the famed *lycée* system when so many of its prize scholars had turned out in after life to be the very statesmen who had so thoroughly betrayed France in the years leading into the war. I reflected that the moral

fiber of our own educational system was hardly its most conspicuous feature now, but then he said that most of all he wanted his children to have some chance for the pleasures of life.

That, from a Frenchman, told me how far we had gone in a generation. He said that I couldn't imagine what five years of occupation could do to the spirit of a country. By the very fact that he himself had been spared the real suffering he could tell what had gone out of France, and he wanted his children to be able to laugh.

Our talk went on, above the roar of the motors of the Constellation, as the desert changed to the darkly wooded mountains of Arizona, to the dramatic red rocks of New Mexico, to the Panhandle country and the Kansas plains, and, just before dark, to the Big River itself. He listened politely to my descriptions of where we were, but he obviously wasn't infested in scenery. Shortly before Chicago it thickened up, and we flew high above clouds all the rest of the way. We had talked our voices out against the motors, and both of us slept. But half an hour out of New York he was wide awake, very excited, and impatient that we could see nothing through the thick bank below. Then we began to cut down. All of a sudden we were through the clouds, just above lower Manhattan, with that whole fantastic checkerboard of white and red neon lights at our feet in their harsh brilliance. Now he was at home. He could spot the Empire State Building without my pointing it out to him. This was his New York. He was back and forth from one side of the plane to the other, just as I had been in the boat train up to Paris, in 1920. It would never have occurred to me then, as a Yale freshman, that a cosmopolitan Frenchman could ever feel that way about anything in America. My Paris was something I had read about in books, the cultural center of the world, the summation of a way of life that I as yet knew nothing about for myself. But his New York was not of the past but of the moment. It was electric and nervous, yet the source of immense power. It was his city of the future, so far as we were to have a future.

¶ One of the great advantages of being an American is the freedom of interchange, if you want it, with anybody from any background. Boarding the overseas plane a month

later, I picked the rear seat on the left. You have the best view there, unobstructed by the wing. A very burly guy sat down beside me, and his wife and small boy took the seat ahead. He was in civilian clothes, but military in bearing, and when we fell into talk, after swapping newspapers, it turned out that he was a Marine master sergeant, with over twenty years' service. He had a month's leave, and since his wife, whom he'd married in China, was English, he was taking her back to London to see her folks.

I wondered how soon we might run out of subjects, or into barriers. But after following along with several of his subjects, how he liked San Francisco (where he was now stationed), the places he had been during the war, and the other places he had fished and hunted, I tried out a few of mine. He thought the West Coast papers, particularly the Hearst ones, as lousy as I did. They were always stirring people up and making them think there had to be another war. He was very sure what he thought about war. I noticed that on the side of his face away from me the corner of his mouth had a piece chipped out of it. The Japs had blown up an ammunition dump on Tarawa while he was asleep near by. He told the story now as though it amused him. He had been saved mostly by sandbags, but still and all he had been knocked fifteen feet through the air and had lost quite a hunk out of a fractured right arm. No, sir, he sure didn't want no more of that.

From that point—we were beyond Gander now with a last shot of Canadian Club under our belts—it was an easy transition to what he thought of Evans Carlson. A fine officer, who riled up the brass. Bish—he asked me to call him Bish, though I couldn't stop him calling me Professor—didn't know or care much about Carlson's progressive politics. All he knew was that the Colonel had had some ideas of his own, and by God he had a right to express them.

We stayed awake most of the night, excited by the way that flying east in the summer involves such a rapid changing of time that there is really no night at all, only twilight and then a startling band of red on the eastern horizon. The clouds reminded Bish of one of them fluffy bubble baths. He told me he had gone into the Marines as a kid in Detroit, mostly because he was a good athlete, and how he'd played baseball and basketball for them all over the Pacific. Now he'd retire in six years, though he'd be only fifty then.

Wouldn't he be bored with nothing regular to do? Hell, no, he had so many interests. He figured on settling in Asheville, North Carolina, the best center he knew for all-year-round hunting and fishing. We said good-bye at the Shannon airport at five in the morning, after I'd introduced him to John Jameson.

[What do 'sights' mean to our age which knows them all in advance through the professionally prying eye of the newsreel? I had wondered often this spring what it would feel like to be in Frankfurt. I had decided to land there and go down to Salzburg through Germany, since I had been a protected civilian in America during the war, and thought I had better begin by seeing the destruction at its worst.

Frankfurt was one of the German cities I remembered best. I had been there first in 1924, a lonely Rhodes scholar on vacation, very consciously seeking culture, and had made my pilgrimage to the Goethe house, whose solidity and spaciousness seemed so right for his character. The painter Russell Cheney and I had been there again in 1931, at the end of a leisurely excursion through the Rheingau to sample all the available vintages of *Rudesheimer* and *Liebfraumilch*. Russell had been particularly fond of the medieval quarter, the best preserved either of us had ever seen in any city; and we were both delighted by the excellent collection of modern French painting in the museum and by the new international-style apartments. I had passed through again, in 1938, on the way to Berlin and Moscow, just before the world blew up, and had attended an outdoor performance of *Hamlet*, very heavily overacted, in the chief medieval square.

This time Hugh Cunningham, a former younger colleague at Yale and Harvard, now working for our military government, met me at the airport with an army car, took me to lunch at his commanding officer's house in the American compound, and then to look at what is left of the city. I was prepared for the wreckage around the railroad station and the industrial plants. But the Goethe house is flat, and the medieval quarter a mound of rubble, though far, I should think, from any military objectives. The museum is a shell and the pictures are still dispersed, but the strangest first impression from such a ghost-town is the way

apartment buildings whose roofs and upper floors were smashed in still have people living precariously in any rooms that have four walls, even with no glass in the windows, and even though the remaining outer walls of the building may fall in—and in many cases already have. The people in the streets, wearing anything that may still serve for clothes, make an inert contrast with the hell-bent jeeps and our army trucks, from which the mufflers all seem to have been removed on the principle of impressing the Krauts with a constant symbol of loud power.

Hugh, who was here first just after liberation, tells me that great progress has been made clearing up the debris, and there is even a little rebuilding. Foundations for the restoration of the Goethe house were just being laid, and a small street carnival had perched itself bravely on top of the rubble where I had watched *Hamlet*. But such a city, in the face of depleted man power and materials, could not, they said, be reconstructed within fifty years. I doubt that the heart of the old city, in which only the cathedral tower stands intact, will ever be rebuilt, since some further disaster will surely overtake it long before fifty years.

The I-G Farben building is intact, but not, according to Hugh, for the reason assigned by some of our liberal press—because of connections with American business—but because our army needed the most modern and best-equipped office building to move into. Maybe so. Certainly we are efficiently at home there. While waiting at the gate for Hugh to make arrangements for the car to take us to Heidelberg, I watched the faces of the enlisted men on duty. A wide range: the privates for the most part extremely young kids who knew nothing and cared less about the strange world in which they found themselves; some of the corporals and sergeants very tough cookies, with the kind of sensual hardness that comes from racketeering, whether in city gangs at home or black markets here.

([Staying for the week-end in the American compound at Heidelberg, I had my first perception of a new and unfamiliar role that is now being played by Americans. Some of those living there were in the army; some, like Hugh, were civilians working for the War or State Department. These latter in par-

ticular appeared to be men of good will. Many of them had been graduate students and teachers at home, and were trying, according to their knowledge, to do a constructive job. It was encouraging that during a long evening's political discussion there was no red-baiting and little of the smug 'more in sorrow than in anger' attitude toward the Soviets. But how can such a group come into any real relationship with the impoverished country and people surrounding them, living as they do entirely apart, in an imported American world, complete even with milk and orange juice, ice cream and Coca-Cola? They bear about the same relation to the country as the British did to India. They are the civil servants of the new American empire, with no background or tradition or training to prepare them for their unaccustomed parts.

Some days later in Salzburg I spent an evening with a group from our counter-intelligence service. They were considerably less impressive. Their leader had gone from Boston University into the army, and had stayed overseas after the end of the war. He was serious, and had learned the surface details of his business. He could describe the political situations in all the countries of Europe, particularly Eastern Europe. But he was without any humility before the complexity of the human situation that now confronts these countries. He was so sure that he knew all the answers that he had unfitted himself for gaining further knowledge. 'The East and the West are irrevocably opposed: war is inevitable'—the one attitude that will bring it on.

¶ [The train down through Germany went past many devastated cities, including Munich, where the station and its surroundings reminded me of an Orozco fresco depicting the destruction of capitalist society. But Orozco had envisaged the suppressed power of the workers overthrowing their oppressors and building anew out of the wreckage. Here was mere desolation, with no constructive power yet in sight.

At Munich the train filled up with GIs who had been in the city for the week-end and were now heading back to their posts. A sergeant and a corporal sat beside the window in my compartment. They were both about thirty, quiet and decent. One had the Paris

Herald Tribune, the other *Stars and Stripes*. Each read his own, and then passed it silently to the other. Neither had anything to communicate further.

([The account of an arrival can never do it justice, since you absorb in a few minutes so much that it will take your whole stay to ratify or expunge. Unless, like D. H. Lawrence, you believe that your first impression of a place is your only honest one, and, after driving through the streets to your hotel as fast as possible, you pull down the curtains and write your book without further distraction.

I reached Salzburg about an hour before dark, and managed to get a *Droschke*. The streets of this dusty provincial town were still familiar to me from the 1931 Festival, especially the charming warmth of the tan and yellow stone and stucco of the baroque churches and houses. We went by the hotel where Russell Cheney and Hanns Kollar and I had stayed, which is now a billet for the American army.

The mile out into the country to Schloss Leopoldskron was less familiar, though I had walked it with Thornton Wilder a couple of times to swim in the lake. Then we had only glimpsed Max Reinhardt's castle through the trees on the other side. Now I was going to be living in it with twenty-five other Americans and almost a hundred Europeans. When the *Droschke* pulled up at the carriage entrance, the driver was made very happy by a tip of two cigarettes. We had already agreed that *alles war viel besser* when I was in Austria before. I entered the big dark stone hall, found Dick Campbell, and began this new experience.

([I'm fascinated to watch what these Harvard boys have already done towards starting a living community here. Until two weeks ago the castle had remained disused since the Nazis left, all the windows on the garden side broken by an American bomb, and the furniture heaped in the cellar. Now they have gathered together Reinhardt's old porter and his wife, a steward and his family who have managed resort hotels, several chambermaids from the D.P. camp across the lake, altogether a staff of

nineteen, just as though they were fully experienced in doing such things.

The three upon whom this enterprise mainly depends make an unusual team. The idea for the whole project, as well as a continual jetting forth of other ideas for other projects, vivid, exciting, valuable, impossible, and fantastic, sprang from Clemens Heller. The son of a notable Vienna bookseller and publisher (who issued among others the works of Freud), he became a refugee student in America in 1938, did his undergraduate work at Oberlin, and is now nearly finished with his doctor's thesis in history at Harvard.

I witnessed the bursting forth of this idea one day last fall on a rainy street near Harvard Square. I had just heard that Clemens, ardently concerned with bringing Europe and America back into touch, was arranging, among other schemes, a series of talks on the United Nations to be given in Cambridge by various foreign ministers and delegates. Jan Masaryk was to be one of the first speakers, and I told Clemens that I would like to see Mr. Masaryk when he came, since I was hoping to lecture in Prague. That set him off. Would I come to Austria, too? Certainly I would, if I was asked. Right there in the rain his organizing imagination began to revolve. He didn't quite have Schloss Leopoldskron before we parted, but he was already on his way towards it.

Of course he got a quick brush-off in trying to secure the sponsorship of official Harvard. He is impetuous and flighty, obviously to the administrative eye an unsound man. The whole notion was premature. Europe was not ready for it. The American army would not give its approval. The students from other countries would not be able to get into Austria. We would not be able to get food.

Thus challenged, Clemens became a demon of activity, not all of it to clear purpose, but endlessly resourceful. He wanted this seminar on American civilization for Austria, and he was determined to have it. At this point he found a perfect balance-wheel in Dick Campbell.

When Dick was eighteen and a summer counselor at a boys' camp, lively in body and mind, a load of wood collapsed on him, breaking his back. He was not expected to live, but after two years in bed, he gradually fought his way back to life, and, deciding in his late twenties that he still wanted a college education, he came

to Harvard in his wheel chair. You never think of Dick as an invalid. As his tutor in History and Literature last year, I found in him a combination of remarkable qualities. He has great executive ability, as he demonstrated in instigating and managing a very successful drive throughout the University to raise money for food for the students of Europe. But though such activity serves as an outlet for his penned-up nervous energy, he also has a fine critical mind, and his deepest interests are philosophical. His warmth of interest in other people and his quiet good judgment were just what Clemens needed.

What Dick needed in turn was provided by Scott Elledge. Scott was considerably older in educational experience. He had graduated from Oberlin in the mid-nineteen-thirties, and had gone on for his doctor's degree at Cornell. After the war, in which he could not serve because of asthma, he had been appointed as an instructor in freshman English at Harvard. He is in the profession primarily because he believes in teaching, which seems to mean, almost inevitably, that he will be leaving Harvard this fall for a position at a smaller college. He is devoted to Dick, and can help him implement his ideas. It was Scott who traveled this spring to universities throughout Europe, to acquaint them with our enterprise, and to pick students.

These, with several other undergraduate and graduate students, form the administrative staff of the Seminar, which makes it unique among educational institutions of my acquaintance. They went out and raised \$25,000 on their own. They secured the permissions from the War and State Departments. They chose their professors from half a dozen different colleges, and collected a working library. Through the International Student Service in Geneva they arranged to have all our food shipped in from Switzerland. They assembled students from sixteen European countries, extending as far to the east as Hungary and Greece, Czechoslovakia and Finland. They still remain quite different from the usual college deans.

¶ The first few days I kept wondering when the Hollywood floodlights would be turned on. How else can you feel when you eat your meals in a forty-foot-high marble hall beneath an immense allegorical representation of the mid-eighteenth-

century Bishop of Salzburg building Schloss Leopoldskron for his nephew, and beneath yards and yards more of flamboyant wall and ceiling painting in a style which, unfortunately, Hollywood could imitate almost as successfully from the Venetian school as the derivative painters here had done? The proportions of the rooms are good, the main staircase with its broad steps and balustrades of tan marble is dignified and not too overpowering. The windows are spaced with the same kind of easy amplitude that gives the particularly gracious accent to less pretentious Austrian houses. Only with the ornamentation did things get out of hand, to produce the effect, oddly enough, of some of Max Reinhardt's own spectacles in their weaker moments.

The library where we lecture is preposterous. It starts out well: light cherrywood columns crowned with gilded Corinthian capitals divide the shelves to which Reinhardt's magnificent collection of theater and art books has just been restored. But from the pinnacled tops of the shelves outrageously fat *putti* leap quite inadequately towards an imitation Italian empyrean through a dazzle of crystal chandeliers. (One of these had crashed to pieces when the bomb fell, a near miss, in the garden.)

The one public room which shows a fully mastered style is a charming example of eighteenth-century *chinoiserie*, with brightly lacquered walls, a little faint now through exposure to damp before the window panes were replaced this spring, and with terra-cotta figurines over the two doors seeming to represent, quite appropriately, the spirit of tragedy and of comedy. Here in this corner room above the terrace Reinhardt and his guests must have passed many animated evenings. And since this is the room set aside for our discussion groups, here—though Reinhardt died in America while his castle was occupied by the Nazis—thought can again spring free.

But the one place where I feel really at home is my own bedroom on the top floor. The height of its ceiling is closer to what I'm used to. The plaster walls are washed over with pink calcimine. The green tiled stove is very pretty to look at, when you don't have to depend on it for heat. The wide floor-boards remind me of those in my eighteenth-century boat-builder's cottage in Maine—but these are much wider, nearly two feet and a half, from bigger trees than

I have ever seen so used in New England. Out the window, across the lake is a wide sweep to the craggy peak of Untersberg, beneath which, according to the legend, lie Barbarossa and his men. Just beyond, not softened by legend, are Berchtesgaden and the salt mines where the Nazis hid their loot.

(Dick asked me to give a speech of welcome at the opening meeting of the Seminar, on the terrace under the trees. This is what I said:

Our age has had no escape from an awareness of history. Much of that history has been hard and full of suffering. But now we have the luxury of an historical awareness of another sort, of an occasion not of anxiety but of promise.

We may speak without exaggeration of this occasion as historic, since we have come here to enact anew the chief function of culture and humanism, to bring man again into communication with man.

We have come from many countries and across the gulf of war. Some of you Europeans were in prison camps in my country. One of our American staff was in a prison camp here near Salzburg. So beneath the pleasant surfaces of this summer afternoon there must lie many questions, doubts, even suspicions. I take it for granted that among the European group, as among the American group, there are some of you far to the left, and some to the right—though none, I should imagine, very far to the right. I take it for granted also that the one thing that unites us is that we are all strong anti-Fascists. Some of the Americans may still live in the protected but unreal state of never yet having had to regard politics as compellingly urgent. Some of the Europeans may have already felt the urgency of politics so exhausting that they have taken refuge in indifference—a state, I believe, where no men of our age will be allowed to remain for long.

But we have not come here to discuss our political problems, but to penetrate to deeper levels of understanding, to probe again to the nature of man. To that end we Americans have brought here the knowledge of our history and of our present society, of its economic structure, of its political theory and practice, of its sociology, of its literature and arts. This makes a unique aspect of our historic occasion. Heretofore Americans have come to Europe as

students, whether as passionate pilgrims with Henry James, or more irreverently with Mark Twain as innocents abroad. But now we come, not to study your culture, but bringing our own.

You will recall, I hope, the classical advice to beware the Greeks bearing gifts. But we cannot even make a claim to being Greeks. As everyone knows who wants to press the analogy, we Americans are the Romans of the modern world. But none of our group come as imperialists of the *pax Americana* to impose our values upon you. All of us come nonetheless with a strong conviction of the values of American democracy, yet also with what I take to be a saving characteristic of American civilization: a sharp critical sense of both its excesses and its limitations.

We come, of course—notwithstanding the official purpose of our Seminar—not merely as teachers but as students. We are aware of our deep and continuing involvement in Europe. We agree with the sentence of one of our best younger poets, Delmore Schwartz, that ‘Europe is still the greatest thing in North America.’ How complex our involvement is you can tell by glancing at our two dozen names. America is no longer predominantly Anglo-Saxon, though you will note several of our names to be of English and Scotch origin. But you will note others from Central Europe, from Russia and Poland, German names and Jewish names, and at least one each from France, from Ireland, and from Denmark. You should note also one serious omission: there is no Negro among us. But that was not an oversight. The Negro scholar whom we invited was unable to come, and we will do our best to remedy that omission another year.

The mingling suggested by our names is America at its best, though how far below that best it often falls we are all of us aware. Such mingling, with completely equal rights, gives the only solid basis for any truly united peoples or United Nations of the present or future.

So let us make the most of our historic occasion, of our island of peace in a storm-crowded sea, as we settle down to live in a castle out of a baroque past. I don’t know how it is for you Europeans, maybe you’re used to living in castles. But as for me, I feel as though I was Huck Finn at King Arthur’s Court. Still, this is a castle with many associations for Americans, since it was the home of a great

producer whose work used to bring many of us to Salzburg. By filling these walls again with the discussion of ideas, we hope to pay our tribute to his memory and to the generosity of his widow, the distinguished actress Helene Thimig, in enabling us to create our community here.

I come here myself with the sense of a personal debt to be paid, and since it can illustrate, I believe, our group endeavor, I want to dwell on it for a moment. I was in Salzburg once before, several years ago, for the Festival. I was here with an Austrian friend, Hanns Caspar Kollar, who had been in my country and who wanted to share with me his Austria. He had had the richly varied experience of the European. He had been a medical student and a dramatic critic, and had then turned to archeology and had spent five years in Rome. He was sailing down the Danube on an expedition of his own to the Near East when the war of 1914 began. He spent four years in the trenches, and came out, after bad shell-shock, with most of his money gone and his career broken in two.

But he retained his restless curiosity for every phase of human character, and seized the opportunity of managing an exhibition of Austrian children's art in America to travel extensively there. When I met him, he knew far more about my country than I did. He was twenty years older than I was, and I was at that time a graduate student with my nose far too close to the books. He had been back and forth by car across the United States, and had observed everything. He could tell me where the best small-town papers were published and where the best foods of the different regions could be eaten. But he was a student primarily of men and women and, though deeply skeptical of the future, he had been much impressed by the vitality, for good or bad, of the people of the United States. He was the first continental European whom I had had the chance to know intimately, and the range and vigor of his mind left a more lasting impression upon me than that made by even the best of my formal teachers.

He asked me to visit him in Austria, and here, in the middle of a performance of *Jedermann*, when the voice of death was calling down from the Cathedral tower, he had a bad attack of the angina from which he had long suffered. I helped carry him out to a taxi, and he recovered, and we had some very happy days and evenings

here. But a month after I had returned to America, he was dead. Ten years later I dedicated to him my *American Renaissance* as to one of the two men 'who have taught me most about the possibilities of life in America.'

What Hanns Kollar gave to me symbolizes what we hope this Seminar can accomplish. We hope to reach the kind of understanding that can come only from the free intermingling of cultures, from informal discussions and conversations far more than from our lectures.

It is more than odd for a speech of welcome to be given to Europeans in Europe by an American who stands more than three thousand miles from the university where he teaches and more than six thousand miles away from his father's ranch in California. It is really a speech of fraternity rather than one of welcome. On this site it could have been done far better without words. For this is an occasion fitted only for music. The program for our orchestra would have to be varied. It might include Dvorak's *New World Symphony* for our theme of promise. But then it would have to include also Gershwin's *American in Paris* if it was to be true to the tempo of lively and brassy jazz which Americans take with them wherever they go. But it should end with an invocation of our presiding genius, who on this spot can only be Mozart. During these weeks here I hope we may capture something of his intellectual distinction and *esprit*, of his gaiety and humor, as well as the somber tragic tones that lie always just beneath even his lightest and most glowing passages.

(| Sitting on the steps of the terrace, looking out to the lake across the now overgrown box hedges of the Italian garden, conversations began to ripen beyond formalities. My first contacts were with the Austrians, since they arrived earliest and were most at home. They run to many types. The least promising is a former officer in the flying corps. Too handsome, too slickly well-mannered. I nearly jump when he clicks his heels and bows from the waist to Herr Professor. He is too eager to please, but I doubt that he has either the brains or the stamina to overcome his early Nazi training. He has much the air of the spoiled American college athlete, ready to take any easy ride. Yet he expressed an

unexpected interest in Eliot as well as in Rilke. He learned his English in a prison camp in England, at a time when he had no access to paper or pencil and had to memorize all the words as he went along. Later he increased his vocabulary by translating *Macbeth* and *Julius Caesar*. When he spoke about poetry, I could see the sensitive schoolboy who wrote romantic lyrics before he was encased within the *Wehrmacht* uniform. He said that here he was happy for the first time in years. I learned afterwards from Clemens that he had said that he still drew himself up instinctively whenever he saw a Jew, but was trying to discipline himself out of that. I doubt that he will succeed. He is too confused, too proud of being a 'gentleman.' An easy victim for the next drum beats from the right.

At the opposite extreme is Fritz Molden, about to be decorated by the United States Government for his leadership in the underground. He was first arrested for distributing anti-Nazi leaflets when he was fifteen. He is now only twenty-three, though with a long history of prison terms, of forced army service and espionage, of desertion and escape to our lines. His father, the editor of the Vienna *Freie Presse*, and his mother, a poet and novelist, both spent the war in concentration camps, but survived somehow. The outstanding thing about Fritz, notwithstanding all his harsh experience, is the eagerness of his energy. He is a student of political science in Vienna, as well as a reporter for his father's paper, and wants to learn about everything. I asked him about his own politics. He is a Catholic liberal, only a shade left of center, but is distressed by the Truman Doctrine, by the now resulting rigid choices between East and West. If Austria must choose, it belongs to the West in all its traditions, but its historical conception of life has little in common, Fritz knows, with American capitalism. He is not a Russia-hater, but he puts it this way: if he had to decide, which he does not want to be forced to, between capitalism and communism, he would choose capitalism, on the grounds that once you have communism with its rigorous controls and secret police (this is what he sees of the Russians in Vienna), you will never get through to democracy, whereas from capitalism you can, as the people want it, advance towards socialism.

I would like to know what, beyond his wonderful human curi-

osity, keeps Fritz Molden so buoyant and hopeful. What is ahead for Austria? It got nowhere towards solving its economy in the period between wars, and would seem now, even without the threatening split between East and West, immeasurably worse in every respect.

The foreign minister, Karl Gruber, who dropped in and talked to us informally one day, is solid and resolute in facing the problems. He knows that the economic recovery of Austria cannot be separated from that of Southern Germany, though he emphasized his country's still undeveloped resources in timber, iron, and coal. But, aware of undefendable frontiers in so many directions, he emphasized even more the country's natural role as a tourist center. So long a distance has Austria come from the aims of the Hapsburg emperors.

The foreign minister is a fighter, as befits the organizer of the resistance movement in Innsbruck; but the current tone of his people's thinking is probably caught more accurately in the skits in the Salzburg cabaret. One skit presents an Austrian citizen confronted at death by the rival claims of an Angel and the Devil. The Angel envisages a realm of unending freedom. The Devil urges him to come and work on atom bombs. The citizen is at no loss to decide. He was freed once in 1918 from the Empire, freed again in 1938 from the Nation, freed still again now—from what and for what is left unspoken, since he does not want to risk direct satire on the American occupiers, as he leaves eagerly with the Devil.

The contrast between the liveliness of the performers, in the old Austrian cabaret tradition, and the inertness of the audience was marked. The joke that got the loudest laugh the evening I was there:

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: *What will you do if the worst comes to the worst?*

CITIZEN: *Join the Russian army.*

M.C. (in consternation): *Why?*

CITIZEN: *Because the American prison camps are better.*

(¶ Inertness seems the norm in a country so situated, energy the exception. Even a few of our students are so hopeless about the future that they have taken refuge in private worlds. Talking with one of the older ones, who is a classical

archeologist by training, and who was badly crippled by a bomb, I sensed that everything had gone out of him except a gentle sweetness of nature. He said that he never reads the newspapers. Why be concerned about present politics when he has those of fifth-century Greece? He said this with such a pale smile that I felt I was hardly talking with a man at all, but with a spirit already in Limbo. After Alfred Kazin had lectured on *Walden*, I found the archeologist reading in the broken-down summer house at the end of the lake, which Reinhardt's actors had once used as a dressing room for their outdoor theater. He met me again with the wan humor that alone seems to hold him to life: he said he would like to come and live in this hut by himself. His chances of doing this are about as great as of his being allowed to continue undistracted in his thoughts of Periclean Athens. Thucydides ought to have taught him that.

Against such a pervasive background of hopelessness the occasional minds of resolution stand out even more strongly. The Austrian I have come to know best is Adam Wandruszka, a man in his early thirties, of mixed Austrian, Hungarian, and Italian descent, a student of comparative history who has already published some essays dealing with the similarities and differences between Europe and America in the nineteenth century. He read much of his American history during his three years in prison camps in Colorado, Indiana, and Kentucky, after being captured in the African campaign. If he ever subscribed to any of the Nazi doctrines, through his interest in Spengler, he has long since outgrown them, as he has outgrown Spengler's schematized generalizations. He is not a doctrinaire of any sort, but seems a Catholic humanist in the best sense. He made the most of his experience as a prisoner, particularly during the time that he was in charge of the furnace in a Negro servicemen's club. The Negroes regarded him as another underdog like themselves. The students among them spoke of the furnace room as Adam's Club, and used to come down there when they could to discuss Parrington and Beard and the other books he was reading. Others used to give him cigarettes, with the warning not to tell the white folks.

I have spent several evenings with Adam and his friend Kurt Seidel, a Vienna physician who is the son of a labor leader, at the

Pauluskeller, where there are some Hungarian gypsy singers. At the heart of our discussions, beneath the throb of the music and the mild release of the green wine, I sense that these men may also be hopeless about Austria's future, but they have trained themselves to live in the present where there is human work to be done.

¶ There is an endlessly interesting contrast between the domains of Herr Russinger and Herr Pomper. Herr Pomper, the steward, worked for the luxury trade, as a young waiter at the Hotel Athénée in Paris, as head waiter at the Red Lion Inn at Henley, and then, after some resorts in Switzerland, he returned to Vienna and had a restaurant of his own. It was bombed out. He has the kind of English accent that one picks up from young and old milords at such spots. His manner is all ingratiation and subservience, but in dealing with his subordinates it is sudden and dictatorial. He makes a great show of efficiency but loses his head easily, and the work is really done by his wife and sons and daughter.

Herr Russinger, the porter, was with the castle even before Max Reinhardt, and managed to stay with it during the war and the Nazi occupation and somehow even during the time when it was closed. He has no subservience, not a word of English, and few words of any sort. This is simply his castle, and he makes it run. He knows what castles are, since before the first war he was in the employ of Franz Josef himself.

He is a very old, very little man, whose piercing blue eyes have the slightest trace of a smile hidden deep within them. The smile may sometimes be brought on by our behavior, which is certainly odd for a castle, but no one would ever know what he thought. He is on the move from morning to night, at a quick but very economical jog. Always looking for something or somebody: 'Herr Ritter? Nicht bekannt?' And when you have barely had time to tell him that Herr Ritter has gone to town, he is off after somebody else. When a windstorm broke one of my windows, he was up there even before I had reported it, and with a cat-like lunge had jumped up on the window-sill and was leaning backwards, outside, examining the situation. I gasped at his precarious stance, four high floors above the stone terrace. 'Vorsicht, Herr Russinger!' 'Danke'—

and with that deep bisyllable, he had jumped down and trotted off again.

No matter how early I get up, I can look out and see him jogging back and forth to the lake, with two big buckets of water each time. He locks the great door of the castle at midnight, but since many of us come in much later than that, Dick was worried that he wouldn't get enough sleep and suggested an assistant to answer the night bell. Herr Russinger wouldn't hear of it. That was his door.

(| The most inert beings of all I have met are the American MPs who guard the Colonel's establishment next door and wander over here when they get too bored. But they have no idea how to escape their boredom. They are very young. They were drafted after the war was over. They knew so little when they left America that they don't even know how to get interested in another country. You try to engage one in conversation: how long has he been here? 'A year.' How does he like it? A blank stare: 'Not much.' 'What do you do with your time off?' 'There ain't much of anything to do in this dump but get drunk.' He tries to warm to that theme: 'Boy, I sure got stunking yesterday on a bottle of that coneyac.' But his heart isn't in it, or even in the thoughts of the girl he laid. He's bored because he doesn't know what he wants. He's lonely, but with no clear longing beyond the look of a Main Street or the way his folks sit around a table. His horizons even there have no vistas. This soldier came from Kentucky, and I told him that I'd been in his state visiting a college friend of mine, who had run for the Senate. But I hadn't been to this boy's town, and politics were still another blank. He started slowly back towards the Colonel's, his feet dragging at the prospect of several more hours of standing around. What is it we do with our high-school education, that leaves so many boys without any range of curiosity, with a dullness towards experience before they have even had it?

(| Salzburg was not heavily bombed in comparison with other cities. But the apse of the cathedral was destroyed, and when you begin to add up the other badly damaged buildings scattered through the town, you easily run into the dozens. The

more recent marks of our army are probably no longer startling to the inhabitants, for whom the army term is 'indigenous personnel.' The jeeps probably scare me more than they now do the Austrians; and the road signs of warning, 'Death is so permanent,' when translated into German may sound something like a sentence out of Schopenhauer. The red, yellow, and blue stripes of the Rainbow Division painted above all the available archways look like the stunts of a winning high-school team on a Saturday night, and may have been taken in that spirit. But I would like to know the town's reaction to the chief temple to American culture that we have erected on the edge of the Dom Platz. It is topped with a familiar red and white sign: COCA-COLA. And just below that: ICE CREAM, CURB SERVICE.

¶ Salzburg is for me, in a special sense, a city of ghosts. Both the friends I was here with last are now dead. At every turn that gives a vista of the medieval Festung on the hill or through the poplars to the swiftly rushing gray river, or, more particularly, at every intimate sight that requires an alert eye to pick it out at all: a half-hidden baroque crest over a door or an unexpectedly bright splash of color from a window box of geraniums and petunias at the end of an alley—at any delight of the eye in any place I ever was with Russell Cheney I am pierced with the realization of how much he taught me to see, of how life shared with him took on more vividness than I have ever felt in any other company. When I notice something new or changed here, I find myself speaking it in my mind to him, just as the evening I heard *Così fan tutte* I was hearing it again with him and Hanns. This is the only sense in which immortality has a meaning which I have experienced: these friends are as present to me now as when we were here together. And the evocation of their spirits by so many concrete reminders is, for the most part, not painful, since they bring with them many of the best hours I have known.

¶ Lecturing to Europeans about American literature is a wholly new experience, and constantly impels me to see some of our traits of mind and character in different lights. I remember that I first became conscious of being an American when

I was a student at Oxford. Until then I hadn't had any occasion to think about it. I had come there with my head far more filled with fancy notions of Matthew Arnold's 'dreaming spires' than with any knowledge of the cool actuality of English upper-class manners. I was first rebuffed and then angered by the Oxford boys' ignorant scorn of America, by what finally struck me as a colossal provincialism on their part. At last I could laugh at it, as on the day when I had moored a canoe under the bank of the Isis and was reading, while two English acquaintances from New College had decided to strip and have a naked swim. Just then a punt with some other English undergraduates and their girls and gramophone came unexpectedly around the bend, and the boy managing the pole cried out instinctively, 'How disgusting! They must be Americans!'

I had become in reaction something of a chip-on-the-shoulder patriot. But I had also begun to read American writers for the first time. Literature at Yale had still meant English literature. Whitman was my first big experience, particularly *The Children of Adam* and *Calamus* poems, which helped me begin to trust the body. I can recall the excitement of starting to read the small edition I had bought in London, in a dreary tearoom near the British Museum. I remember even more concretely the circumstances of my first reading of Thoreau. I took *Walden* with me, very self-consciously I'm afraid, on a vacation trip to Freiburg and the Schwarzwald, and started it on the steamer up the Rhine. I did not get to *Moby Dick* until after I was back in America.

In subsequent trips abroad in the nineteen-twenties and 'thirties it was naturally Europe and not America I was seeking. In that summer of 1931 Russell Cheney and I started out with some days in Holland, in equal pursuit of Vermeer and the new architectural masterpieces of Oud and Mies van der Rohe, and then went on through Germany towards Austria. I was reading *Faust* again, and Hugo von Hofmannsthal. But the only English was some sections of *Ulysses* that Hanns Kollar wanted to hear aloud.

Nothing would have then seemed more unlikely, as I sat in the midst of the cosmopolitan audiences at the Festival, than that in a decade and a half I would come home after *Figaro* to find stretched out on a sofa on the top floor of the castle a Czech boy deep in

Steinbeck. That has imaged for me, more sharply than any other single detail, the break between the present and the past.

I had become aware, through every new European visitor to America during the past couple of years, that Hemingway, Faulkner, Steinbeck, and Caldwell are now trotted out on all occasions as 'the great American authors,' as though they were all equal and as though no others were known. But I had not been quite prepared to have a Danish law student tell me of the popularity of *Forever Amber* in Copenhagen, or a serious Swedish girl ask me, 'What about Bromfield?'

The wheel has come a full turn from the time when Americans were not read in Europe to this time when our best and our worst seem to be read indiscriminately, simply as something new. So I figured that the aim of any lectures should be to sift out the best by relating the present to the past, by showing that, good as some of our modern authors are, American literature did start before 1930, and that the period of our greatest writers still is that of the mid-nineteenth century.

In every case I am most absorbed with the interplay of thought and expression between America and Europe. For instance, in talking about Emerson, the dramatic center became, to a degree that it had not previously been for me, his own voyage of self-discovery to Europe at twenty-nine. It was the best kind of year for him. It freed him from the constrictions of his ministerial background, and it freed him also from awe of Europe by giving him instead the intimacy of knowledge. He came primarily to seek out four men, all writers: Landor in Italy, Wordsworth and Coleridge in England, Carlyle in Scotland. What comparable English masters would draw a young American to Europe today, when the leading poet in England was born in St. Louis and the leading English poet of the next generation is now an American citizen who lives in New York?

What was most exciting in discussing Emerson here was the sense of closeness to his European sources and analogues. Many of the students knew Goethe far better than I, and were also aware of the dangerous consequences following Nietzsche's transformation of Emerson's great individual into the far less innocent *Übermensch*. The Frenchmen looked polite but incredulous when I said how

much Emerson admired a writer so different from himself as Montaigne. My strongest sense of standing on common ground with some of my audience, in a way I could not quite have done at home, came during the discussion of Emerson's belief that a writer's language should be rooted deep in everyday life. When I cited Lessing's similar belief in the rightness of Luther's choice, for his translation of the Bible, of the language of 'the mother in the house, the children in the street, the man in the market place,' I had the feeling that many members of the group, whether from Germany or Denmark, Czechoslovakia or Finland, were bringing to bear their own local knowledge of one of the most fertile aspects of the Romantic period: the way it broke through the restraints of decaying neo-classicism to the real life of the folk.

When I read 'Bacchus' aloud, conscious of ears trained on richer and more complex melodies, I felt, nevertheless, more keenly than ever before the peculiar purity of its eloquence.

(¶ My seminar (to give it its high-sounding German name) or discussion group (to describe my own hope for it) suggests in its very make-up its unusual intellectual atmosphere. Of the dozen regular members, two are Austrians (from the universities of Vienna and Innsbruck), three are Italians (from Rome and Florence), three are French (from the Sorbonne, Lyon, and Strasbourg), one is a Finn (from Helsinki), one a Swede (from Upsala), one a Dane (from Copenhagen), one a Greek (from Athens). I urged all the Czechs to take one of the other seminars, since they can work with me, if they want, this autumn, at Prague.

The group has in common only a knowledge of English and an interest in some aspect of American culture. Their backgrounds and experiences are as varied as their countries, though most of them are in their late twenties or early thirties, beginning teachers whose careers were interrupted for years by the war. In the face of this and of the great difficulty now in getting books, I was not at all prepared for the ambitious quality of some of their projects. The lovely Finnish girl, though she has previously been able to read only *The Spoils of Poynton*, is so fascinated by James that she wants to do her doctoral thesis on him. So does one of the Frenchmen, who was a teacher in England just before the war. He wants

to trace the effect of James upon Virginia Woolf, as well as to place his development against its background in the French novel.

One of the Austrians is primarily a linguist and is already well advanced on a thesis on American army slang. The other is the handsome flier who, now that he has finished *The Waste Land*, told me that he was too healthy for it. That kind of health may be worse than disease.

One or two of the others are here just for the ride. It would be interesting to know what varying views they had when they first heard of this odd American project run by students. What would it be? A fancy rest-home? A slick handout of the American century?

The Greek is the oldest member of my group, a musicologist by training, with a degree from Berlin before the war. He teaches in a well-to-do boys' school in Athens, and is, I gather, very much of an Anglophile. He is very pleased to read American books also, but was drawn here, I should judge, mainly by the chance of hearing the operas and the concerts at the Festival. And why not?

The Swedish girl is the most conventional. She told me the first day that she had read all the books on my list, and had come to hear me discuss them. When I told her that I expected her to write an essay during the course of the summer about the author she cared for most, she said, No, she did not want to write. In Sweden they did not write about an author until they had read all his works.

The tall dark Dane has just won one of the much-prized Royal medals for an essay on Shakespeare. But I was appalled to hear that the subject set him for a whole year's work was not the plays themselves, but J. M. Robertson's cockeyed theory that parts of them were actually written by nearly every other Elizabethan dramatist. The student had finally seen for himself that Robertson was wrong, but after what an enormous waste of effort. He seems also to have worked so hard to win the prize—perhaps because he is a Communist and in need of some academic security—that his nerves, still strained by work in the underground, now seem exhausted and leave him melancholy. He tried to remedy them by dashing up the Untersberg his first day here, since he had never before seen a mountain. But he got a bad sore throat, and became more melancholy.

The most remarkable group are the Italians. The girl from

Florence seems on the surface the usual slightly dry schoolmistress, but beneath that surface is an ardent disciple of Croce, alive to the whole range of esthetic and metaphysical issues. Both the men from Rome have already published. Gabriele Baldini, though still in his late twenties, with four of those years in the army, has issued an edition and critique of Poe's poetry, and translations of *The Narrative of A. Gordon Pym* and Willa Cather's *My Antonia*. He is now engaged on an anthology of American poetry, with literal versions in Italian prose, and we have spent many hours wrestling with questions of diction. How to get a word that will catch not only the movement but the sound of the 'dashings' of the Oregon in Bryant's 'Thanatopsis'? How can you convey the deliberate circumlocutions of Robinson's thought in 'The Man Against the Sky'? How do you handle the cockney talk in the pub scene of *The Waste Land*? What, if anything, can you do to suggest the jazz rhythms of Vachel Lindsay's 'Congo'? Sometimes, since my Italian is slight, we pursue the possible words into the half-way house of French, and again and again I have the delightful sense of discovery that comes from being forced to reduce even a familiar text to its most delicately precise terms.

The man with the most impressive character is Vittorio Gabrieli. Unlike his two compatriots, he is seriously occupied with politics as well as literature. He has a Dantesque face and an idealistic devotion to libertarian principles. He was jailed for a year by Mussolini for having helped publish anti-Fascist literature, and is now at work on a book on Tom Paine. But it is symptomatic of the tentative and confused nature of current European politics that despite his experience, and despite the sensitive awareness of his mind, he still has much to learn about what is now politically possible. He belongs to the small Action Party, which seems old-fashioned even to an American. It is composed mainly of high-principled intellectuals, liberals in the continental, Crocean sense of the word, so devoted to their abstract ideas that they are still detached from any mass base. They have not yet learned that no progressive party can carry real weight unless it is solidly rooted in the labor movement. Vittorio knows such things in theory, and may be able to lead his party toward them. In which case it would probably be merged with the militant socialists.

In the meantime, on the small sum that he receives as a teacher of the English language and as a translator of several English classics, from *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* to *Culture and Anarchy*, he has managed to marry and to carry on his own work. His mind is open to the major questions in art and society.

(¶ How to find a common denominator in such a group? How to get them discussing at all? Their entire academic training has accustomed them merely to lectures or to set-reports from each student, to be rigidly criticized by Herr-Doktor-Professor alone. When I came into the room for the first discussion, all of them, even the girls, stood up.

I cited Henry Adams and Lincoln Steffens as my masters in method: Adams who had been bored by giving lectures to big classes and who had felt that the only hope for education lay in such small discussion groups as ours; Steffens who had mocked at the conventional procedure whereby the professor asked the students questions to which he already knew the answers, when the only possibility for fresh thought would come if the students asked the questions to which they did not know the answers, questions that might even force the professor beyond his depth.

Our structure was the simplest: a major author would be introduced each week in the large general lectures held for anyone who wanted to come, these lectures then to be followed by our weekly discussion of a single great text. The authors were chosen to give as much variety as possible and yet not to conflict with a similar list worked out by Alfred Kazin. Emerson had enforced himself as the inevitable starting point, and Alfred then gave *The American Scholar* a concrete body by presenting *Walden*. Then he went on to *Leaves of Grass* while I turned to our tragic strain with *The Scarlet Letter*. We both wanted to talk about Melville, so we divided the general lectures, after which our conference groups combined to discuss both *Moby Dick* and *Billy Budd*. Then we made the contrast with our later nineteenth century, Alfred by means of Henry Adams and I through Henry James.

At that point we both realized that we had taken *Huckleberry Finn* for granted as it could not be taken in Europe. So my junior colleague at Harvard, Jack Levenson, gave an excellent account of

how it is by no means merely a boy's book but, through the trip down the river, one of our few epics of a whole phase of American life, and also, through the relationship of Huck and Jim, our greatest anti-slavery novel. For the twentieth century we had chosen in prose *Sister Carrie* and *U.S.A.*, which could serve to represent the American development of naturalism. For poets I picked Eliot, and Alfred took Cummings, for whom he has a special fondness as a poet of joy, and in whom he could also present a modern variant of Thoreau's anarchism, at the same time that I would be dealing with the polar difference between Emerson's religious thought and Eliot's, and the kinship in values between Eliot and Hawthorne. We looked forward also to some final informal discussions of other modern authors.

The first sessions of my group were fairly stiff. Each of the students in turn asked formal questions. These covered, to be sure, a wide range of issues, but they were all addressed *from* the individual student *to* me. They did not involve the rest of the group. We warmed up a little on Hawthorne, when we found out that allegory, whether or not we had all read Kafka, no longer struck us as an outdated mode. The tensions between good and evil in our time have been so naked that the amoral attitudes fashionable in the nineteen-twenties now seem themselves outdated. The urgency to understand and resolve these tensions so dwarfs all other considerations that readers now find once more a satisfaction in the slightly veiled abstractions which serve as characters to enact the stark tragedies in Hawthorne's world.

The most searching question came from Anni Halme, the Finnish girl. 'What would Hawthorne think of the existentialists?' That carried us back to Kierkegaard, in order to establish the theological terms which Jaspers and Heidegger inherited, terms to which the Paris group has now given an essentially different currency. Hawthorne was indifferent to theology, but, despite that indifference, he was, unlike Sartre, still a Christian. When Hawthorne stressed the sacredness of the individual inner life as the meeting-point between time and eternity, as the moment of *Existenz*—to use Kierkegaard's word—he, like the theologians, found this sacredness dependent upon man's losing his self-enclosing and warping pride through his humility before God. The danger

in the thinking of the present Paris group is that, having turned deeply inward as their only resource during the outer horrors of the war and the occupation, they now seem to be begetting merely a new romanticism, a new sanction of the private ego as the one lawgiver to be trusted, of every man as his own Messiah, with humility only before himself.

I may have felt this more strongly than the Europeans, because of the modish vogue of existentialism in America. Sartre and his school must be admired for their great share in keeping alive the sense of individual dignity and responsibility during the occupation, and I can understand also their continuing need to accept absurdity and nausea, even as philosophical attitudes, in the face of the destruction of Europe. But in America, where we have passed through no such overwhelming experience, there is the likelihood, as so often before in our borrowings from Europe, that we will take only the superficial form and try to make it cover a basically different content. Already in the little magazines, existentialism is being used as the newest phase in our writers' perennial escape from adequate social responsibility. There are plenty of good reasons for the writer and thinker to feel alienated in what Baudelaire, I believe, first called the great American desert. But the struggle for the proper adjustment between society and solitude is more compelling even than when Emerson conceived it. Hawthorne already comprehended the catastrophic effects of the proud lonely will in a Roger Chillingworth or an Ethan Brand. Our intellectuals should know, after observing the rugged extremes to which our nineteenth-century individualism extended in the days of Henry Ford and Herbert Hoover, that our road, whether clearly open now or not, leads not towards further independent isolation, but towards a more fully shared existence, not towards anarchism but towards socialism.

¶[In the evenings, if you moved from room to room in the castle, you could quickly travel the gamut from Crocean esthetics to the theory of monopolistic competition. The only subject on which there was less talk than I would have expected was immediate politics. At first I thought the Europeans might simply be playing safe, not quite sure of what strange sort

of American world they had got into. Certainly our first general discussion on economic planning, led by Wassily Leontieff of Harvard, was, except for a few observations from the Czechs and the Scandinavians, more decorously conventional than it would have been in Cambridge. At the end of the session we had a keg of beer on the terrace and eased gradually into an evening of singing—national anthems in various tongues, 'Roll out the Barrel' and 'Joe Hill,' and, at one gay moment, for the first time ever, I guess, at Schloss Leopoldskron, the 'Internationale,' led by Alfred Kazin, with everyone furnishing his own words. But the hit of the evening, more in tune with the spirit of the place, was several of Figaro's arias, acted with consciously exaggerated expression by Gabriele Baldini. That delighted even the impenetrable eyes of Herr Rus-singer, who stood by the keg drawing the beer into big pewter pitchers. And it carried us farther toward international amity than anything so far.

Only after that you began to learn the kinds of doubt that faced the Europeans coming here. For the most part these boiled down to the suspicion that somewhere, smoothly concealed under the bright innocent-looking American surface, lurked a catch that would spring to release the flow of official propaganda. A very few of the group, who had heard some rumors from the right, emanating in this case from American rather than European sources, had been warned that 'those Harvard leftists' were not characteristic of America.

But most of the students continued to want to discuss other things besides political issues. The Central Europeans in particular, and all those from small countries to some degree, were not so much weary of politics as they were oppressed by a feeling of the dwindling value of action, since it seemed that their destiny would not now be determined by themselves but by the great giants to the East or West.

The Czechs were the most vivid exception. They had no trace of apathy, a couple of them Communists and the half dozen others Socialists of varying shades. They were proud of their recent revolution, and proud of their history. They emanated the energy that comes from knowing where you want to go. Two of them quickly

became natural leaders in our unusual community, or as Margaret Mead described it one day, our 'bizarre group situation.'

Petr Koubek, one of the Socialists, had been in Buchenwald for underground activity. Now twenty-seven, one of the most responsible and most animated of the whole Seminar, he is a government economist in Prague, and feels himself on good independent terms with both Russians and Americans. His natural gifts for making things run impelled him, before any of the other Europeans, to volunteer to help with the executive details. It was he who organized a week-end trip to Prague to bring us back some much-needed meat, talking his fluent way through the guards of the Russian zone without having the right papers. He granted that he was greatly helped at that point by the red hair of Patsy Ritter, the wife of one of the American assistants in Government, of whose strawberry-blonde beauty the Russians clearly approved.

Jan Stern is, at twenty-two, a vigorous Communist, but so outgoing and friendly that he quickly became liked even by those who most disagreed with him. Big and husky and somewhat nearsighted, he bumps around like a Saint Bernard puppy. He was sent to a concentration camp, along with his family, for being half Jewish, but the experience seems to have left no scars upon him. He loves to go on the longest possible walks, and to sing in a loud, not very melodious voice. He becomes serious at the drop of an idea, and argues with the struggling, contorted gestures of a young intellectual whose thoughts are still too large for him. He feels it his responsibility to uphold the Communist position whenever challenged. Yet he not only talks but listens, and is immensely eager to learn. What he looks forward to this fall is a year's scholarship in philosophy at the University of Moscow.

His nearest equivalents in curiosity and vigor among the other nations here are Fritz Molden and Bruno Trentin, an Italian boy not quite twenty, the youngest of our whole group. Bruno, who has the build of a football player, is the son of an anti-Fascist who went into exile in 1926. Born in Toulouse, the boy had never been in his own country until towards the end of the war. He spent his fifteenth birthday in a Vichy concentration camp in France, and his sixteenth birthday in a similar camp in Italy. He was badly beaten up several times, but you would never guess it now. A law student at

Padua, as well as a newspaper reporter, he has thrown himself into the regeneration of his country. He has aligned himself with the Action Party, because, while holding Socialist aims, he believes that the traditional Socialists are played out in Italy. But he knows the need for his party to have a labor base, and has been particularly active in trying to organize the hitherto unorganized peasants in the South. He realizes that the Communists may beat out his party in doing this. But he does not regard them with hostility. He has found them very intelligent, and wants to learn from them. If his own party fails to gain mass support, he would probably align himself with the Communists. He is studying American Government here, with Neil McDonald and Ben Wright. He is a great admirer of Henry Wallace, and is writing an essay on the possibilities for a third party in the United States.

Of these students who are really interested in politics, none happens to be French, which may result from the fact that the Frenchmen here are for the most part students of literature, rather than from the cynical disillusion so pervasive now in France. The Scandinavians are stalwart anti-Fascists, but, with one or two exceptions, they tend to take their own brand of socialization for granted. The Germans, only five altogether, are the most reserved. Even when gradually relaxing from the tensions of their position in relation to the rest, they still seem lacking in positive values.

The political conversation that I will probably remember longest was with Enrique Cruz-Salido, a slight, dark, finely handsome Spanish Loyalist. He left Spain in 1938, at fourteen, along with his father, who later died in a French concentration camp. He managed to get to Mexico with his mother and younger brother and sister, and spent five years there. But at the end of the war he left his family to come back to Europe, still hoping that Spain too would be liberated. Now he is not so sure. In a few quiet sentences he conveyed to me the complex moral burden of being a political exile, living from day to day, from year to year, on the one hope of return. He wants to be in his own country, of whose landscape he speaks with fond intimacy, as though he had been looking at it only a day or two ago. He did not want to settle permanently in Latin America. He does not want to be a Spaniard in Paris. But he rec-

ognizes now that he must have roots, that this endless waiting to begin his real life is slowly devouring his morale. He feels cut off, sterile in isolation. His voice was so low that I could just hear him. I have never had a deeper insight into loneliness.

(¶ A Sunday *Ausflug* to Wolfgangsee recalled the many excursions to the Schwarzwald during that Oxford vacation at Freiburg. There was the same early morning air of expectation, with every seat on the hard wooden benches of the train filled half an hour before it started. The lake itself, reached after a succession of darkly wooded mountain passes, was an astonishingly bright green, unlike any American water that I know, much nearer to emerald than Walden Pond, but with none of the deep blue tones of Tahoe. The villages on each side of the lake, Saint Gilgen and Saint Wolfgang, were untouched by the war and their churches were a lovely yellow stucco, not shabby like those in Salzburg, their houses white with red tile roofs.

Otto Hietsch, the linguist who is interested in American slang, knew where to get a boat, and we rowed four or five miles over to Saint Wolfgang to see the Pacher altarpiece. We also stopped at the White Horse Inn for some beer—very watery, alas, since that is all that the inadequate ingredients available now permit Austrians to make. Most of the rowing was done by Kurt Seidel and myself, and his measured leisurely stroke perfected on the Danube and my short choppy jabs picked up from Maine lobstermen did everything but coincide. Anni Halme, who has fainting spells from anemia of the brain as a result of too many years of overwork and undernourishment, lay asleep in the bow, her face drinking in the sun, her hair over her shoulders, a frail captured mermaid.

We fortified ourselves for the two-hour trip back on the train, where we knew that we would have to stand up, by a few bottles of not too bad white wine on the shadow-dappled terrace café at Saint Gilgen. We also managed to get the one unrationed item on the menu, some soup, or rather some hot water colored yellow by a little fat, to supplement the remainder of our bread and cheese.

On the train, where there was singing most of the way, I stood looking down at an old country couple. She sat very still, with the tiredness of far more than this day in the sag of her breasts and

shoulders beneath her thin, worn black dress picked out here and there by a faded flower pattern. He was much more dressy in his rough white-linen jacket and *Lederhosen*, his red Sunday tie looped through an oak ring, and his hat splendid with three feathers and an unbroken circle of little metal badges corresponding to each peak that he had climbed. His gnarled face was deepened by hungry sensual eyes of a pale blue. An old sport, with his appetite for life undiminished by more than sixty years of it. I could hear the voice of one of my Boston barroom friends: 'Don't let these gray hairs fool you.'

Part of the time he watched with hearty amusement the antics of a thin dog on the seat opposite which finished licking a few bread crumbs from a brown wrapping paper by chewing and swallowing with some difficulty the faintly food-smelling paper itself. Part of the time he stood up and leaned out the window to look down the track with all the expectancy of a small boy. But for most of the ride he sat quietly holding his wife's hand, and fondling the edge of a bandage that covered three of her fingers. He often turned to look at her, without speaking, and in the blue lakes of his eyes devotion was still mingled with passionate desire.

¶ The book I had most looked forward to talking about in Europe was *Moby Dick*, partly because Melville is less known abroad than, say, Poe or Whitman, partly because it seems to me more and more to be our greatest book. I was immersed again in its amplitude and magnificence, and felt how even the details of whaling are brought to life by Melville's thirst for experience, which almost rivaled Goethe's in its breadth. In re-reading also Melville's essay on Hawthorne, which he wrote in the fervor of composing *Moby Dick*, I found a new clue to his own creative intention, in his statement that American literature ought to be most characterized by writers 'who breathe that unshackled, democratic spirit of Christianity in all things.' Those two big words 'democratic' and 'Christianity,' used so often in the evaluation of our history that all felt value can leak out of them, were not used as empty shells by Melville, but at his own moment of fresh discovery of their meaning.

The significance to him of these terms comes out most strongly

in the great passage at the end of the chapter 'Knights and Squires,' after his introduction of his cast of characters. Here he rose to his highest eloquence in enunciating the 'august dignity' with which he wanted to endow his old whale-hunter and the crew. It is the most profound passage in our literature on the necessity for democratic tragedy to find heroes different from Shakespeare's kings. When Melville couples together so unexpectedly the names of Bunyan, Cervantes, and Andrew Jackson, you reach also the heart of his belief that a nation's literature must be deeply rooted in the life of the people.

His preoccupation with Christian values is most evident in his projection of the relationship between Ishmael and Queequeg. The isolated wanderer rediscovers human brotherhood not, ironically, through companionship with one of his civilized fellow countrymen, but with a pagan savage. Melville's sense of Christianity is most living at the point where Christianity and democracy fuse, in his belief in the equality of man with man. More than ever before I was moved by the scene where little Flask, the third mate, has mounted upon the shoulders of his harpooner, the massive Negro Daggoo, in order to see farther over the ocean's surface. Melville reflects how 'the bearer looked nobler than the rider.' Such reflections on the lack of any superiority owing to a race's whiteness occur more often in *Moby Dick* than I had remembered. They are peculiarly moving today when so many of the possibilities for any real democracy, both at home and in our relations abroad, depend upon the continual reaffirmation of that self-evident truth.

'A man ain't nothin' but a man'—this line from the John Henry ballad kept running through my head as I read about the companionship between the young American and the yellow man from the South Seas. But John Henry's words were tragic. He uttered them to his Captain Tommy at the moment he had staked his strength to the death against the inexorably inhuman steam-drill. Melville's words were tragic too. His story does not go on to a fulfilment of the 'divine equality' among men. Even the friendship between Queequeg and Ishmael was dwarfed and finally lost sight of in the portrayal of Captain Ahab's indomitable will. The single individual, a law only to himself, treats his entire crew as mere

appendages to his own ruthless purpose, and sweeps them all finally to destruction. No more challenging counterstatement to Emerson's self-reliance has yet been written. No more penetrating scrutiny has yet been made of the defects of individualism, of the tragedy that ensues when man conceives proudly of himself as pitted against the mass, instead of finding the fulfilment of his nature through interdependence with his fellow men.

(One week-end my friend the historian Richard Schlatter and I went to Munich. Here I got my most complete sight of a destroyed city. The architectural loss is less great than at Frankfurt, since so many of the public buildings of Munich were nineteenth-century imitation Italian. But the mere volume is overwhelming—by army estimates more than 60 per cent of the whole. Standing on any corner in the heart of the city, you receive a strange sense of space, block after block almost entirely gone. You are in the kind of waste land produced only by our time. Former civilizations went to decay more gradually. Only now can the living contemplate, not the slow ruins of Rome, but those of last night.

The Residenztheater, the most beautiful rococo building I ever saw, which provided the perfect setting for some of the first performances of Mozart, was gutted by incendiary bombs. No church that we passed, either Gothic or baroque, wholly escaped. Both the Alte and the Neue Pinakothek are level with the ground, perhaps because they had been close to what was once Hitler's Brown House. The art dealer's gallery where Hanns Kollar had introduced me to the work of Paul Klee no longer has any street wall.

One of the crudest ironies was that official army road sign over the still-standing arch of the gate into what was the old city. DEATH IS SO PERMANENT. DRIVE CAREFULLY. With tokens of hundreds, probably thousands of deaths visible in every direction, with virtually no traffic at all now at any hour of the day or night, that sign, which protected only the occasional reckless GI in his jeep, spoke with a horrible obtuseness. Maybe the death of a city is assumed, in our odd American speech, to be only fairly permanent.

In the railroad station was an image even more haunting. When

we had passed out into the main waiting room, with its tall pillars still standing, but with much of its roof open to the sky, the likeness to Orozco's kind of empty desolation was altered. Clustered around the pillars in the dark, milling in and out of the harsh glare of the occasional arc lights in the vast hall, were hundreds of figures. For a moment I thought they were waiting for a train. Then I noticed that they were nearly all young, boys and some girls, hardly any of them older than their early twenties, and several as young as fifteen. This was the first black market I had seen in operation, and we came back to watch it for another hour around midnight.

A workman on his way home, a wood-carver, helped piece together what we saw and overheard. The traffic at present was ludicrously petty, in small quantities of butter and grease, but mainly in American cigarettes, which were selling at six marks apiece, instead of the official mark and a half. Still the traders stayed there hour by hour, and the wood-carver said that they left only to buy tickets to the nearest suburb where they slept in one of the uncounted bombed cars along the tracks. They had no other home. They were the lost boys and girls of destruction. Their families were dispersed or dead. Few of them looked old enough to have been long in the army. All of them—the quiet voice of the wood-carver explained—were growing up at a time when they had had no regular opportunity to learn a trade. The faces of even the youngest girls showed the boldness that masks insecurity. The dirty, unshaved boys looked older than they were, and their expressions were sullen and brutal. The smell of bodies that had slept long in the same clothes was very strong. Army MPs and German *Polizei* circulated occasionally through the crowd, but made no effort really to interfere. After all, the cigarettes must have come through the hands of GIs.

This crowd looked like the pictures, from the early nineteen-twenties, of the wild boys of Russia. But here in Munich there was no creative transformation yet at work. A painter hoping to recapture for our time the intensity of a medieval inferno, with its grotesque and lurid darks and lights, could find here his controlling image. He could find also the horrifying look of bestial hopelessness on the faces of the damned.

¶ The rest of the city, even on a Saturday night, was as quiet as a small village. Hitler's favorite beer hall is now a Red Cross club, several others were bombed out, and the half of the Löwenbraukeller that remains had closed at nine o'clock. Against the ghostly emptiness, there were a few brave signs of renewal. A placard listed the forthcoming repertory at the smaller house that now substitutes for the Stadttheater. Goethe's *Clavigo* was announced, *Phèdre*—in Schiller's translation—and *The Taming of the Shrew*, as well as *Three Men on a Horse*. On Sunday, after passing the broken Library and the burnt-out University, we found that the vast Museum for German Art that Hitler had built on the edge of the Englischer Garten was, again ironically, untouched. In 1938 Russell Cheney and I had walked rapidly by its acres of mild conventional landscapes and sentimental genre scenes to which alone the Nazis had given sanction. Now the heart of the collection from the Alte-Pinakothek is hung here to better advantage than it was in its somewhat dark old building. The largest room is given over to an unexcelled group of Rubens, 'The Slaughter of the Amazons' at one end and 'Drunken Silenus' at the other. Such a roomful, with the sensual warmth of the color, the flame-like movement in the crowding forms, the riot of the bodies of the struggling Amazons and of tottering heavy old Silenus, possesses an irresistible vitality. It is an immense force in bringing you toward life.

It was another kind of pleasure to find again the little Isenbrant, 'Rest on the Flight into Egypt,' which has a delicacy and grace generally absent in the stolid medieval German works. I had forgotten the idyllic green-blue landscape behind the resting Virgin, and I could hear again Russell's excited exclamation over its charm. No one among the big Sunday crowd of Munich citizens was paying much attention to it. Goya's quietly sinister 'Plucked Chicken' and the crowded nightmare humor of Hieronymus Bosch's surrealistic fantasy would probably be a more accurate mirror of their recent experience.

The one accidental token or recent art was in a window near the Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten, now taken over for an American officers' club. A white wire-haired terrier on a vivid green ground, and some lettering doing its best with the troubling apostrophes: DOG'S TRIMMED HERE. DOG'S BATH.

([On the army train back from Munich—
'The Mozart,' which the anonymous but now well-known GI who
couldn't quite pronounce it was so pleased to find had been named
after 'a famous Austrian band-leader'—we got into conversation
with an American who works with the International Refugee
Organization. A native of the Pacific Northwest, he had been a
student of history at Reed College. He was an admirer of Parrington
and a perceptive critic of Toynbee's essentially anti-democratic
bias. A nervous serious idealist of the best sort that grew up with
the New Deal, he was intensely anxious now for us to build
democracy in Germany.]

The Bavarian farmland out the windows looked so opulent in
the late summer evening light that you could almost forget Munich
for a moment. 'The Russians know what they want, and we'd
damn well better stop arguing with ourselves and go ahead and
teach what we believe in.' We were back in the groove where my
own thoughts had revolved so often before. What do we Americans
believe in? What do we want? If devoted democrats like this man
should manage to introduce into the German schools what they
believe in—the revolutionary tradition from Paine and Jefferson
to the populists and progressives and Henry Wallace—our reaction-
ary congressmen would start to yammer in almost the same tones
as the Nazis once did. If, on the other hand, we teach capitalistic
free enterprise in a country that has no present possibility of any-
thing of the sort, what have we taught? The Marxists mastered long
ago a lesson that none of us can ignore: it is worse than futile to
try to instill democracy without building concurrently its economic
basis.

He went on talking about the intellectuals in D.P. camps. Some
Central European professors who had been in the camps for more
than two years still took it for granted that they could work only
in their own profession. And so they did nothing. It is hard to
imagine even the stuffiest American professors standing on their
dignity in that way. They would certainly feel that they could help
around the kitchen or chop wood, however clumsily. We may not
have achieved Thoreau's fine union of work and thought, but most
of us have supported ourselves by a job at some stage of our educa-

tion. And we at least have escaped the futility of regarding work with our hands as degrading.

(¶ One evening after a concert there was a party with salami sandwiches and beer in the room of one of the other teachers. The atmosphere was oddly similar to a Middle-Western summer school, even to the co-eds perched, giggling, on the edge of the bed. And one of the co-eds came across with the kind of remark co-eds make on such occasions. 'Professor, here we are already past the middle of our time here. How sad it is that we can't stay much, much longer.'

This dark handsome Rumanian girl even looked like a co-ed, since as a D.P. she had been working as secretary for an American officer and had learned how to use lipstick and to press her slacks. But the next day Ella Winter, who had come to pay the Seminar a visit, told me something of this girl's story. Since she was Jewish, she had not only been sent by the Nazis to a concentration camp, but had been condemned to death. She had been marching in a line on its way to the furnace when a Czech guard managed to help her escape by hiding her for three days in a pile of dead bodies. Her father and mother did not escape. Her fiancé was told that she also was dead. A year later, before the end of the war, he had married another girl. The girl at our Seminar felt that she no longer had any roots in Rumania, and wanted only to get to the United States.

At this same time I learned a few more details about Adam Wandruszka which reveal him to be an even more impressive figure than I thought. We had gone on the belief that we would gain more essential truth from our former enemies if we did not try to force direct political questions too soon. Adam now told me that he had been a member of the Nazi party on ideological grounds. His reading of Spengler, coupled with his perception of the hopelessness of the Austrian economy, had caused him to welcome the *Anschluss* in 1938, when he was a graduate student of twenty-four. He also says frankly now that since there is also a slight Jewish strain in his blood through one of his great-grandmothers, he was afraid that unless he put himself solid with the party at the outset, he might get in trouble later.

He hoped, as many other Austrians did, that the worst excesses of the Nazis might be checked in Austria. But he does not try to explain away his conduct. He fought as an officer in the *Wehrmacht*, and it was only after he became a prisoner that he began to reflect that he might have been wrong. Only gradually did Jefferson's values begin to replace Spengler's. Now he is the most persuasive kind of convert, a real humanist who puts his learning to use in helping him to understand his own past errors. The other main fact that I picked up at this time—not from Adam, but through a chance remark by one of the other Austrians—is that, as a former party member, Adam is banned by a new Austrian law from ever teaching history again. He is very clear in his acceptance of the general wisdom of such a provision. He is quite without bitterness or self-pity about its application to him, even though it cuts him off from the work he cares for most. He will try to secure appointment as a state archivist, in order to have some chance to continue his writing about the relations between the intellectual history of Europe and of America.

¶ One of the events that we staged for the fun of it was a reading of poetry from as many literatures as possible. It is a strange experience to listen to poems in languages of which you know hardly a word, but we wanted to hear what effect could be produced by the sound alone. We were handicapped by the fact that very few had brought along their own poets in their very sparse baggage. Even Max Reinhardt's library fell short of Dutch and modern Greek.

Since the Italians were among the best readers, we asked them to lead off, on the grounds that Italy is the mother of modern poetry in the vernacular. They put on a delicately modulated program of Leopardi's 'L'Infinito' and the canto in *The Divine Comedy* about Paolo and Francesca. The Austrian aviator, who writes romantic lyrics in the style of a century ago, surprised me by the firmness with which he recited by heart Rilke's 'Autumn Day' ('Herr: es ist Zeit. Der Sommer war sehr gross'). The French poems were the least rewarding, since they were read by two *lycée* teachers who presented Hugo and Baudelaire in a tone that made them sound like important lessons to be learned.

A small, red-cheeked Danish student of history gave us the comic relief by speaking some drinking songs in dialect, with the compliment to me that since the beer was good, it might be presumed to have been made by one of my ancestors, who were brewers in Copenhagen. Frank Thistlethwaite, a young don from Cambridge, read the passage about the hunt from *Venus and Adonis*. He felt that its sonorous rhetoric sounds even better if you are not bothered by recognizing the artificial diction. Alfred Kazin chose Cummings' richest poem, his long tribute to his father; and I read Whitman's 'Reconciliation,' as being appropriate to our undertaking of this summer, and, as an instance of a poem that sounds magnificent even if you can't follow its sense, Hart Crane's 'The River.'

The *tour de force* of the evening was the performance by Jan Stern. He had been greatly bothered that Czechoslovakia could not be represented, since there were no texts at hand. Then he had disappeared into the garden right after supper, and came back in the middle of the program. He had succeeded in reconstructing some poems from memory, and recited first, in booming tones, Hora's 'Hymn to My Native Land,' a poem of the resistance movement. He went on to the feat of giving us a lyric of Lermontov's, first in Russian and then in the Czech verse translation, so that we might compare them!

The climax came when Angel Rizo, one of the two Spaniards, read some Loyalist poems from a pamphlet that had been printed in Paris by his fellow students. He read with rich warmth, his short figure silhouetted against the lake in the falling dusk. The dignity and consecration of his countrymen's early and enduring stand against Fascism reverberated through the suffering in his voice.

¶ Among the late arrivals at the Seminar was Joseph Szentkiralyi from Hungary. His military permit had been held up by the American authorities for nearly three weeks after our opening, but he had kept after it. A man now in his early thirties, he had studied at Columbia for a couple of years before the war, and this past winter he offered for the first time ever at the University of Budapest a course in American intellectual history and literature. A hundred and fifty students enrolled, three times

as many as in the comparable course on Russian literature. But the total resources of the available library consisted of one copy of Parrington and two copies of an anthology in the American army overseas edition.

He had gone about his job as solidly as possible under the circumstances, but he could hardly do more than tell his students about texts that they could not read, just as if they were back in the Middle Ages. His own opportunities for buying books now are very slight. His salary runs to 400 florins a month, and even a current Hungarian novel costs 50 florins. He has not been able to afford a book during the past two years. But he has already outlined for next winter, mainly from what he remembers of his work in America, a course on his favorite subject, the development of naturalism in the novel. At the Seminar he did a thorough essay on American society as seen in *Sister Carrie*. He was impressed most by the description of Hurstwood in the breadlines, and was able to perceive, by the authentic handling of this material, how effectively Dreiser had bludgeoned his way through the false idealizations of our genteel fiction of the 'nineties.

When Szentkirályi left the Seminar the boys were able to give him, from the stock they had collected in America, a couple of dozen volumes of American literature, in Modern Library reprints, and the new edition of Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*. I have never felt so strongly how precious a book can be, or how far its influence can carry.

([I had chosen James and Dreiser for the pivotal contrast of our modern literature. They are so totally different both in their methods and in the Americas they reveal that they bear out the complexity of our modern development and the impossibility of reducing it to any single generalization.

The Portrait of a Lady was the James novel most available, and it was very suitable to the occasion, since, through Isabel Archer, James made one of his freshest studies of the American's discovery of Europe. In dealing with James, the group was moving on a common ground of references to other fiction. Neither Hawthorne nor Melville had corresponded to anything in the European nineteenth-century tradition. Hawthorne, though born after Balzac,

had still turned to Bunyan and Spenser as his masters, and his ethical crises were in the pattern of Milton's. *Moby Dick* could hardly be fitted into the categories of fiction at all. Even as late as nineteen-thirty, the Yale library still catalogued the book under cetology, instead of under American literature. And for the right analogies to its art, one had to turn back to Burton and Rabelais or forward to Joyce and other masters of symbolism, and hardly at all to the masters of realism of Melville's own day.

But James had been nourished, not only on Thackeray and George Eliot, but more essentially on Balzac and Turgeneff and Flaubert. He had then stood up for his kind of realism against Zola and the grandsons of Balzac. Europeans hearing about James could draw immediate analogies with their own heritage, and, indeed, some of our group were for that very reason less interested in James than they were in Hawthorne or Melville. One of the French students voiced the same criticism that Gide has made, that James brought to European readers what they had already in excess, that his endless analysis reached only the minds of his readers and not their deeper emotions.

For me, however, his peculiar poignancy had never been more affecting than while rereading *The Portrait of a Lady* in a Europe so different from the undisturbed world of his prime. Ralph Touchett seemed more than ever before to give the emotional center to the book, Ralph, whose quality is condensed into the characterizing image that James added in his late revision: 'His serenity was but the array of wild flowers nixed in his ruin.'

I had not remembered the delicately effective use that James makes here of his special kind of ghost. When Isabel asks, so lightly, at the moment of her fascinated first glimpse of Gardencourt, 'Isn't there a ghost in this romantic old castle?' Ralph responds, yes, of course there is, but it is seen only by those who have suffered much, and so he hopes that she will never see it. The theme is not introduced again until the very end, when Isabel, alone in her room, has a sure premonition of the very instant of Ralph's death. At last, with the fullest intensity of suffering, she recognizes that ghost.

The release that James can give today is what impelled several young American soldiers, as they have told me since, to turn to him

while they were in the army. They had felt a great need, during the unrelenting outwardness of those years, for his kind of inwardness, for his kind of order as a bulwark against disorder. And it seemed also to Jean Soulas and Ann Halme and several of the other Europeans as we talked, that James now has a meaning for us akin to the image with which he characterized Ralph. In a world of breakdown such as he never conceived, we can now find in his work, not an escape, but a renewed sense of the dignity of the human spirit, however precarious this may be in our own overwhelming sense of imminent ruin.

([The Europeans' experience caused some of them to discount Dreiser in a different way. His naturalism bothered them by being far clumsier than Zola's. Some of the more conventionally academic (and academic readers in Europe can be even more conventional than in America) disapproved of his characters for their lack of moral reactions. Only a few, possessing the developed sociological interests of Szentkiralyi, became absorbed in Dreiser's massive study of the gap in America between wealth and poverty, in his knowledge—in which Henry George was his forerunner—that America is the most terrifying country in which to be really poor.

But could any European quite respond to what still excites me so much in reading Dreiser: the great new domain he opened by bringing into our literature the city as it was felt to be by those struggling in it, particularly by the outsiders looking in, or rather up, at the world of financial power? The glamor of Chicago which Carrie feels is felt also by Dreiser, the immigrant's son from the wrong side of the tracks. And in no other author is there a more accurate recognition that in the fierce competitive jungle of the big city there are no equals, only those moving up or down.

([It was a continual source of astonishment to discover how much some of these students had been able to endure. The Czech boy in the Sokol shirt, Jaroslav Schejbal, seemed, with his endless fund of energy, like a boy on any Middle-Western campus, making the basketball team and Phi Beta Kappa with the same undistracted drive. The most revealing aspect of his

essay on Steinbeck was the way he saw completely through the sentimentalization and falseness of *The Moon Is Down*, which he could check against his own experience, and yet failed to perceive those same defects in *Cannery Row*, which he took to be an authentic picture of the American dispossessed. What he liked in Steinbeck was what he kept calling the 'naturalness' of his characters. When he went on to make the same point about the characters in our movies, it became apparent that what he was really responding to was not art, but our current ingenious tricks in evading any appearance of artificiality. He said that this same naturalness was what made American movies a success in Prague, where the Russian movies were now often failures. He objected to the exaggerated gestures in *Ivan the Terrible*, but, surprisingly, liked the acting even in such phony versions of the war as *Guadalcanal*.

That made the issue about Steinbeck clearer. Jarka knew that the Hollywood account of the war was worthless, and he came gradually to realize that much of the later Steinbeck was almost as unreal. But, like the millions of Americans upon whom Hollywood can count, he was a sucker for type-casting, and warmed up to the easy human looks and manners of those sergeants on their celluloid Bataan.

All of this led at last to his talking about what he had had to do during the war. He was only twenty-two when it ended, and he had by then spent three years of forced labor in a German armament factory outside Prague. He worked twelve hours a day, seven days a week, with no days off, not even Christmas or Easter, except for a week each summer. The trip from his home to the factory took two hours each way in a train crammed to the doors and steps, so nearly all his waking hours for three whole years had been sacrificed. Yet he gave the appearance of having come out of that experience with as much vitality as though he had just kept in training for football.

His father, who was a tailor, was not so lucky. He had to work the same kind of hours making uniforms for the Germans, in a room without decent light. It had finally cost him his sight. So Jarka now has to crowd in extra hours on top of his studies to do

translating which helps support the family. He wore his Sokol jersey all through the Seminar to save his winter suit.

¶ [Two discussions of esthetics, on two successive days, one from the angle of official Communism, the other from that of the Columbia Broadcasting System, brought out surprisingly similar points. The first took place with Jan Stern the night that some of the officials of the local D.P. camps gave a lawn party for the Seminar. The party, incidentally, at which a Salzburg orchestra did its somewhat mournful best in imitating American jazz, could have provided Margaret Mead with much material on national styles of dancing, with the prize going to a sleek young Athenian jitterbug.

Jan had just come back from a week-end in Vienna, where he had talked with several Russian journalists. He described their account of current Soviet policy on the arts. A crucial issue was the official suppression of the poetry of Akhmatova, which Jan had read and admired. But the point was—and he accepted the official reasoning—that although her poems might be good in themselves, their effect on the people was wrong for this time. Her lyrics were too personal, too melancholy—and melancholy could not be afforded in a country that had to summon all its energies to rebuild after the terrible destruction of war.

The Soviet state takes the position, which states have tended to do throughout history, that thought can be dangerous. Indeed, thinkers and artists often mean it to be as dangerous as possible. They try to do everything they can to break through all expected reactions, to disturb, to shock, to compel people to keep life fresh by not allowing it to stay hardened in any conventional molds. At this point the cleavage between official life and real life becomes absolute, whether in the Athens of Socrates or the Jerusalem of Christ.

One central problem in the immense mass state of today is how to utilize what we are able to learn from psychology. The most elementary lesson is that even if thought is dangerous, its rigid suppression may be even more dangerous to the general health. Anyone who has ever truly felt a poem or a play, even the most melancholy, even *Hamlet*, knows that the function of such art is

not further to depress, but to release. This knowledge is common in primitive societies, where the role both of the medicine man and of the ritualistic priest or poet is to exorcise the evil spirit and to invoke the good spirit by *naming* them. The *naming* must be exact, and it requires all the magical skills of the artist, all his control over words to make them become one with the thing.

The artist in later societies realizes that his words remain merely words, but that if he will devote the thought and feeling of a lifetime to their service, he may be able to present through them a picture of reality. It will be a restricted reality, since it will be stained and warped by all the limitations of his own very finite personality. But even the history of the seeming fanatics and freaks in the arts, of the Kierkegaards and Kafkas, should prove that no authentic vision of life, since it is a vision of *life*, can fail to be on the side of life and not on that of death.

This means, and anyone can test it, even in the most morbid passages of a Leopardi or a Schopenhauer, that no matter how depressing the view presented, it can still fulfil something of the function of the primitive exorcism by naming life even as it is at its worst moments, and thus releasing us from fear of the unnamed and unknown.

Aristotle's distinctions between good and bad tragedy would still remain, and it is obvious that if good art can do good, bad art can do harm. And here we enter the area of the censor, an area where great modern societies need to summon all their collective intelligence to avoid the rigidity that means death to the mind. But not to be distracted by obscenity, as it is hard not to be if you have lived in a city where a serious social study like *Strange Fruit* is condemned by the courts one year and a strip-tease act like *Forever Amber* is cleared the next, I want to stick to the implications of Akhmatova's case.

No one questions her skill or integrity as an artist, simply her possible effect on some of her readers. What is 'true' or 'false' in poetry is often hard, even meaningless, to establish. But suppose that what she says about life is not true, what then? Could not a state that believes in the widest possible diffusion of education among its citizens trust them to discover such a fact for themselves, as they compare their reading with their experience? Isn't one of

the chief functions of education to prepare people to be able to do that continually in their daily lives?

But no one claims that what Akhmatova says is not true—true, that is, to her own experience, to what a sensitive nature has felt in certain moments of loneliness and suffering during the long agony of war. The question is whether such feelings are good or bad for other citizens now. And there we are in the realm where legislation is most futile, and can even do great harm. Lives will always have their crises of agony, as the inheritors of the language of Dostoevsky and Chekhov and Gorki can well know.

There is all the difference between the inevitable tragedy attendant upon the fact that every man who is born must die, and the avoidable special tragedies attendant upon the capitalistic system. But even if we believe that life in a socialist state will necessarily be happier for more people, we are faced with one further fact. Human reality as it is felt by people living it is always concrete, not abstract; complex, not simplified; richly various, not standardized or uniform. You will not make people more cheerful, you will not make them better workers for the next five year plan by preventing them from reading Akhmatova. Those among them concerned with poetry will feel that they are thereby being deprived of something. That is itself bad for morale.

If life is hard, we do not escape that hardness by closing our eyes to it. If life were not hard, we would not have so much use for poets, the secret of whose power over us lies in the way they provide us most consolation when, in a *Lear* or an *Oedipus*, they are most tragic. They bring us back to a love of life by a deepened acceptance of men's constant desperate ruin, and, in the face of that, of man's heroic capacity for no less constant renewal.

I didn't say all these things, as Jan and I sat on the grass and drank our beer while we watched the dancers under the Japanese lanterns. But many similar thoughts have been in my mind for years now, in the conflict between my enduring belief in socialism and some of the grave shortcomings of the present Soviet state. Jan's mind was by no means closed on any of the issues, but against the background of a Nazi concentration camp, he was more ready to accept the necessity, if not the desirability, of more sweeping controls than I, out of my easier American experience, could be.

I struck against insurmountable schematizations even in his unusually resilient grasp of Marxism, and he doubtless was putting me down as an outdated middle-class intellectual. We did not quarrel, but felt suddenly far apart, even as we all rode home from the party, standing up in some trucks, filling the late night streets of Salzburg with the unusual music of our medley in so many tongues.

The next day I heard Lyman Bryson—who joined the Seminar for its last two weeks—lecture on mass communication in America. He began with his distinctions between fine art, folk art, and popular art. Fine art is art as we have known it traditionally, art created by great masters. Folk art is art that has sprung from the group life of a community, which means a small, self-contained, and, in most cases, primitive community. Popular art, in Bryson's terminology, is the art of the large modern community, of the industrialized state, the art disseminated by the big newspaper, by the moving picture, and the radio.

In accordance with the great differences between their media, he found equally significant differences between the intentions of the fine artist and the popular artist. The fine artist dwells on the dissimilarities between himself and others, in order to make his work a unique personal creation; whereas the popular artist, in his desire to reach as wide an audience as possible, avoids these dissimilarities, in order not to offend any group. The function of the popular artist is to provide the modern public with what it thinks it wants. The material he works in—and here Bryson's term was most penetratingly novel—is the gossip of the community. The radio entertainer and the syndicated columnist, in particular, purvey that gossip, the floating information and the likes and dislikes which bind people together even in our vast country.

This conception sees the popular artist as an enforcer of conformity, and reveals the views of art taken by the Hollywood mass producer and by the rigid Communist, not as things opposed, as both would like to believe them to be, but as essentially the same. They both have gone to the same lengths through their belief that thought is dangerous. The Hollywood producer measures the danger solely in terms of money, since any deviation from the approved and expected formula may mean the loss of a million at the box

office. Both are committed to official versions of life, and must, therefore, be resisted at every point by anyone concerned with breaking through the official to the real.

([Bryson is an interesting case of what can happen to an American of good will who works in this field of mass media. He sees the problems, the tremendous forces that can make for corruption of mind and taste. He said that he did not aim in his lecture to give value-judgments, only to describe the situation with which we are faced. But his terminology was loaded throughout with unconscious value-judgments. Take the word 'popular,' which is very confusing in this context. In one of its senses it has traditionally been linked with folk art, and was so used, for example, by Yeats in his great essay, 'What is Popular Poetry?' But quite apart from that, 'popular' inevitably implies for American ears something superior, as contrasted with 'unpopular.'

If the aim is simply to describe the arts of communication which we have developed in America through the technology provided by industrialization and controlled by finance capitalism, why not use a more neutral term? 'Commercial' art would be too loaded on the other side, though it would correspond to Bryson's definition of the artist in mass media as 'one who wants to supply the most entertainment for the most money.' 'Mechanized' art would make it sound too mechanical, whereas the potentially rich results in any phase of this field, when put to proper social uses, are not at all mechanical. 'Technological' art would seem the best term, since that suggests the process by which the vast new areas of communication have been opened.

The bias Bryson betrayed in his curious conception of the artist's psychology is even more symptomatic of the views into which dominant Americans have drifted. The notion that the fine artist sets out to exploit his differences from other men (and Bryson often used the word exploit) would hardly have occurred to anyone earlier than the romantic movement. The great poets of the age of Wordsworth found themselves, to be sure, for the most part in rebellion against their society, and the realm which they attempted to preserve against the brutalization that they saw in the first stages

of the industrial movement was often lyric and private. Since that time the alienation of the artist from a world he never made has become so recurrent a theme that it is easy to forget that this was not the case before we were forced to talk in such terms as mass civilization and minority culture.

Fine art was by no means always unpopular, something outside the scope of the Columbia Broadcasting System, of interest only to readers of 'little magazines.' Homer and Sophocles and Shakespeare are among the greatest examples of popular art. But since Defoe and Dickens, the novel has had an even more important role in popular education than the drama, and has often taken on, as in Fielding or Tolstoy, some of the functions of the epic in prose. The most universal fine art has in the past always become the most lasting popular art. The fine artist has been occupied not in dwelling upon his differences from other men, but in finding through his art the most complete means of communication with them.

What Bryson is really talking about is official art, hardly a new cultural problem, as the surviving architecture of all dynasties can tell us. But it assumes a new phase through our still developing mechanical devices. It would be wrong to think that all official art must be bad. The Paris of Louis XIV rose out of taste, though the Berlin and Potsdam of the Kaisers rose heavily out of its absence. The stultifications of our culture do not come from any evils in machines themselves, as Thoreau and D. H. Lawrence sometimes contended, but from their misapplication. Technology can be used, for instance, to give Tolstoy to millions of readers, as the Soviet presses have long been doing. It can make symphonic music familiar to listeners on Kansas farms, who have never been in a concert hall. But the problems of wise control are still largely unsolved in our age, when technology is making it ever more easy for such control to be wielded by a few hands. That is one of the greatest dangers in dictatorship. And you could hardly exaggerate the dangers of standardization, I felt, while wondering how the diverse Europeans were reacting to one of Bryson's examples: that a single issue of *The Ladies' Home Journal* takes as much paper as the Columbia University Press needs for seventeen years.

([I was going to lecture at the Austrian International College at Alpbach on 'Das Menschenbild der neuen amerikanischen Literatur.' This summer conference was organized by Otto Molden, Fritz's older brother, shortly after liberation, as a symbol of Austria's desire to resume its part in international culture. It was appropriate to hold it at the Tyrolean village of Alpbach, since Innsbruck and the whole Tyrol had been a center of the resistance movement. The first meeting, in 1945, had apparently been the most hopeful, when all the allies had been represented. Now, with economic conditions still so grim and with the allies' military restrictions still tight against entrance into Austria, the foreign delegations were considerably curtailed. The only sign of the Soviet Union was its flag along with the others. Outside the little inn, it made a particularly brilliant splash of color against the whitewashed walls of the old church.

Having come now to realize that there are several kinds of American literature current in Europe, I wanted to disentangle them. The situation could hardly be more different from what it was when Melville was still angered by that scornful English question, 'In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book?' Translations of our best sellers are in every bookstore window, and the reasons for the special popularity of *Gone with the Wind* are illustrative. The main reason is no doubt the same that made it such a boon for Macmillan's during the depression: its lively story carries its reader along without effort, and in translation lack of distinction in language would count for even less. But it seems also to have appealed to Europeans as something new, a representation of the large American vitality. On such grounds it was voted only last winter in Budapest, in a sort of Hungarian Gallup poll, the favorite foreign book, present or past. *War and Peace* ran a rather poor second. And when the question was changed to the old stand-by, 'What ten books would you take to a desert island?' the Bible alone nosed out Margaret Mitchell.

This is probably a phenomenon representative of the new effect of American mass production upon Europe in its time of breakdown. Even more startling was the almost comparable vogue in France, where I would have expected more resistance to vulgarization of taste. But *Autant en emporte le vent* brought big prices on

the black market during the war. The complicating factor was that it was read as a book of another heroic people during occupation, quite without regard to the crucial distinction that in that other war the side that invaded should have won, since it was a war over slavery. And when Paris, with its unparalleled heritage of salacious literature, betrays it for an *ersatz* product like *Forever Amber*, Europe seems, like ourselves, to have reached the uneasy epoch when people have been forced by the speed of journalistic communication to read so much and so fast that a book is no longer something to be dwelt upon with care, but rather a bright blurred symbol calling out a quick response.

The grouping together, particularly in Paris, of Hemingway and Faulkner with Caldwell and O'Hara and even Cain, is a different phenomenon, a more sinister sign of the intellectuals' present state of ill health. Alfred Kazin talked many times about this. We agreed that taste for writers of such unequal value must find its common denominator in the preoccupation with violence which they share. It is a paradox that America, spared so far the worst violences of Fascism and war, has yet projected imaginative violence in a way that seems authentic to Europeans. It gives them perhaps a mirroring image of their own desperate knowledge of the recent plight of man. When one is so consumingly aware of the brutalities in modern man as the European intellectual must be, and in search of new expression of that awareness, discrimination between the masterfully exact style of a Hemingway and the crude sensationalism of a Cain may seem a critical luxury of little importance. Yet precisely such critical luxuries helped build the civilization of France.

At Alpbach (where Thomas Wolfe once stayed), I tried to sum up these phenomena, and urge to the attention of Europeans a literature they knew far less, the work of our poets during the past thirty-five or forty years. It becomes steadily more evident that, starting with the generation of Edwin Arlington Robinson, we have produced not only more poets of real distinction than during all the rest of our history, but poets comparable in their rich variety to those of any country of Europe since 1914. Few of this mainly German-speaking audience had even heard of Wallace Stevens and Jeffers and Ransom, to suggest as different schools as

possible. To try to convey a few poems aloud, I read first from Carl Sandburg, the name in the Whitman tradition most familiar to Central European readers of poetry. I chose 'Osawatomie,' which remains one of his most effective affirmations of the ever-continuing revolution. Sandburg suggests, through the figure of John Brown, a partial re-embodiment of Christ, and keeps reiterating through the refrain—"Where did all that blood come from?"—the consciousness, on the part of the people's champions, that peace can be built only upon equality.

The choice of Frost was practically enforced by the surroundings. The granite base of the mountains in this part of the Tyrol gives to the trees and grass shades of green almost indistinguishable from Vermont. And regional poetry still seems completely alive in an Austrian village. I read 'Out, Out—,' in which the bareness of understated tragedy saves the poem from any touch of the complacency that sometimes weakens his later work. The unfailing exactness of Frost's phrasing, the seemingly offhand and yet so perfectly modulated pitch and tone of the speaking voice are what make him at his best one of the great masters of American style. Anyone who has heard Frost read his own poems feels embarrassed at having to give them without the nasal twang against the rich ground base of his New Hampshire accent. Yet, even through my imperfect reading, the audience at Alpbach listened so quietly that I could hear as an undertone the cowbells from the Alpine pastures.

My last choice was designed to demonstrate the variety of our poetry. When the literary history of our period is written, the central and most revelatory contrast will surely be between the poet of the country and the poet of the city, between the so-called plain man with his sureness and the complex intellectual with his doubts, between the inheritor of Emerson's self-reliance and the inheritor of Hawthorne's dark sense of the individual's insufficiency. The choice of a poem from Eliot which might balance Frost was restricted by the need to have a short poem that could suggest its burden directly to the listeners' ears. The lyric that composes the fourth movement of 'Little Gidding' seemed most appropriate. It is an extraordinary proof of what a poet who has learned his craft through the intricacies of the later *symbolistes* can do when he returns to formal patterns. For the love which it describes in its two regularly rhymed

stanzas is double throughout. The fire of destruction (it was written against the background of the air raids) and the fire of purification are so interinvolved through the poet's symbolic handling that the agonizing nature of love as Eliot knows it has never been more tellingly expressed.

The connecting theme in this lecture on 'the picture of man,' the *Menschenbild* upon which our *Weltbild* must, inescapably, be based, was the essentially critical nature of American literature. This is scarcely a novel point, but it comes out with new meaning when you are talking to an audience whose Nazi government during the war made much use of Upton Sinclair to demonstrate the corruptions of American society. This is the heart of the issue in the fight against conformity, not only of Stalinism or of Hollywood, but also of the sentimental nationalism of the later Van Wyck Brooks or of any of those who believe that the intellectuals, by castigating the serious shortcomings in our culture, have become irresponsible.

One of our most robust traditions, from Franklin and Mark Twain, is the healthy value of an unimpeded flow of satire—gay, ebullient, stinging, or savage as the situation may require. To lose touch with that tradition now, when there are so many balloons to be deflated, so many enormities to be mocked out of existence, would be to yield the remaining vestiges of our integrity into the ready hands of the blurb-writers. Upton Sinclair, though an earnest rather than a laughing satirist, is still part of that tradition. Even if his propaganda tracts can be turned against us by our enemies, this is a risk that must always be run by a society that is not afraid of itself. The only adequate defense against his criticism is to prove that it is one-sided or untrue, and the only effective way to render it invalid is to remedy the abuses he has attacked, not to pretend that they do not exist.

It is difficult to estimate what a 'healthy' literature is. The relations between what men think and write, on the one hand, and the actual state of society, on the other, are complex. Was Juvenal, in his excoriation of Rome, 'unhealthy'? Or to take the question of taste, did the audiences of John Webster's violent tragedies respond to them because they mirrored everyday London and gave thereby the satisfaction of recognition? Or because, in their intricate plots of Italian intrigue and poisoning and murder, they were far from

everyday London and gave the satisfaction of novel and shocking discovery? Or because, despite surface differences from everyday London, maybe as a result of them, his scenes conveyed some sense of terrible life in which the audience felt itself involved?

When you consider the poet and the novelist who have had the most influence in America during the past quarter of a century—measuring influence in the most vital way, in the effect they have had upon serious younger practitioners of the craft of writing—you are confronted with these issues in their strongest form. The peculiar role that is often played by literature could hardly be realized more sharply than through the fact that Eliot and Hemingway, who do not correspond at any points to what Dos Passos has called 'our story-book democracy,' have yet given to a generation of readers by now the sense of life that comes through expert expression.

The implications for our society may be grave when our most gifted writer of prose is so possessed by themes of destruction and death, and when the leading poet now, since Yeats' death, in the English language, so often envisages our time as being on the verge of new dark ages. Both Hemingway and Eliot are deeply disturbing in the very way that neither the Politburo, nor the slick magazines, nor the National Association of Manufacturers of the American Way of Life want any writers to be. But disturbance is the unfailing sign that the rigidity of death has not set in; and the disturbance provided by the real artist, unlike that of the sensationalist, comes from his having patiently perfected his control over words until they can embody, not what he would, but what he has to say.

The effect of such articulation upon the beginning writer is not to depress him, no matter how one-sided or limited the vision of life of the master writer to whom he is attracted. The effect of perfection in art is to stimulate the young writer to devise expert expression for his own very different sense of life, to the very degree that it does *not* correspond to the experience of an Eliot or a Hemingway. This is the awakening function of art ignored by the official psychologies. It was not ignored by Marx or Engels who so admired Balzac, despite his monarchic and Catholic views. For they recognized that the responsibility of the artist is not to solve in advance the tensions of the society he lives in, but simply—yet

this is a task for a lifetime—to give, to the full, existence as he has known it to be. The role of a Hemingway or an Eliot, though scarcely that of a Balzac or a Dante, is to keep alive the vital, delicate, and always menaced accuracy of communication, without which there can be no renewed discovery of man by man.

(¶ The accumulative impression of the weeks at Salzburg was not primarily intellectual, but human. I had not been aware of the full extent to which the educational systems of Europe are now debilitated. There is every reason for it, God knows, in the years of war and general privation. But the situation in France, to which for generations so many countries have turned for a model of excellence, is deeply disturbing. Much of the rich marrow seems to have gone out of it, leaving only a brittle shell. The root trouble, even on the university level, is economic. Even at the Sorbonne, a professor must supplement his salary with all sorts of hackwork. To a greater extent actually than in America, the abler minds are being deflected into journalism or government work, and those that remain in scholarship feel that they are being deadened by drudgery.

There is also the imponderable degree to which, in all countries in times like ours, sustained intellectual work begins to seem useless, since it is continually threatened, often broken in upon and destroyed. In our discussions of critical method this summer, I often felt a slow tiredness, and a lack, except from a few, of the challenging questions that can come only from minds immersed in what has been done in a field, what is immediately being done, and what is most pressing, therefore, to do next. Owing to the destruction of many libraries, and, even more now, to the shortage of currency with which to buy foreign books, every European tends to be shut into his own country, without adequate means of sharing in the intellectual currents of the world. And when you no longer know what is being done, it is difficult to go ahead. I often encountered in our discussions, not of American texts but of method itself—except from the Italian Croceans—the same kind of unprepared ignorance that I had brought from Yale to Oxford twenty-five years before.

But what we did manage to do by living together in such intimate

circumstances was to break through many of the suspicions and reserves that separate peoples. Some of the distinctions that exist between Americans and Europeans had already been obliterated before we arrived. The two Greek undergraduates and a few of the younger French had already formed the habit of studying with the radio on. They finally tuned in so incessantly on the programs of recorded jazz provided by the American army that one of the American assistants, a step ahead still of the Europeans at least on the insides of radios, had to 'fix' ours so it wouldn't go. The notion purveyed by our advertisements that Americans are the most washed race in the world was considerably qualified by the dormitory washroom, where some of the Italians in particular seemed to be scrubbing and rubbing from morning until night. When we finally managed to lay our hands on some good beer, an overwhelming number of Europeans from all countries still preferred the Coca-Cola we got from the army. They had come to like it during the war, when it gave them the only sugar they had for years. But I felt that I was witnessing a monstrous moment of decay in the civilizing tastes of the palate.

We warmed up to one another in varying ways. At first the Americans startled the Europeans by speaking to them, even if they didn't know their names, as they passed going up and down the castle stairs. But by the end the only pair who still looked pained by the habit were the two Australians, who seemed determined to be more British even than they had been at Oxford, and not to have their precious privacy invaded by anyone. On the other hand, there was the day when Jan Stern decided to drop 'Good morning, professor' and to go the whole way to 'Hi!'

Margaret Mead introduced her students to the methods of cultural anthropology by turning them loose on investigating the community of the Seminar itself, just as though it was a South Sea island. They watched our habits in and out of school, though the student who had asked for the assignment of observing who fell in love with whom decided to give it up before he got into trouble. It was startling enough to learn from a Dutch girl one morning at breakfast that her assignment was to examine the table-manners of Americans.

The serious barriers were those between anti-Fascists and their former enemies, carefully concealed by the general good will to make our experiment succeed. Two of our group had been crippled, a Belgian and an Austrian, by bombs from opposite sides, and one evening they came riding home from *Figaro* in the same *Droschke*. When some of us went to the cabaret, a girl who had been in Rotterdam when it was bombed and two former Austrian bombardiers sat down together at the same table.

But the question of the Germans was more complicated. There were only five of them, one of the smallest groups. At first it seemed that they had been so carefully de-Nazified that, though they were certainly not Nazis, they were hardly anything else. Correct, timid, stiff, they were so locked within themselves that it appeared impossible to find out what was really going on in their minds. The only tension of such magnitude that it might have led to the break-up of our Seminar had formed very soon. The Danes discovered that one of the Germans, not one of the students but an older scholar, had been established at the University of Copenhagen during the war. The Danes then went as a group to Dick and Clemens and Scott, and pointed out that they would feel themselves disloyal to their fellow students in Denmark if they remained at the Seminar with this man. This was the kind of tinder that could easily have blown us up. There was nothing for our administration to do but to call in the German and ask to hear his side.

He had acted obtusely in coming to Salzburg at all, since he knew—as we did not—that his presence in Copenhagen had been protested by the students there at the time of the liberation. But he had the kind of abstract academic mind that is common in all countries, and impossible in human relations. He had not associated himself with the Nazis, he had stuck to the theory of his subject, it was not his fault that the Nazis had invaded Denmark, others were to blame, not he. Probably everything he said was true. But he was an arrogant professor standing on his rights. Who was he to be questioned by students, American or otherwise?

At that moment his case became hopeless. He could have saved himself if he had had any of the normal human quality that would have made him want to talk out the issue with the Danes directly. But he had no human quality at all. He was the frighteningly

familiar type of scholar who believes that devotion to his research is enough devotion for anybody. Finally he began to realize that the Danes meant business, that they would protest his presence and leave if he stayed. The Czechs and the Spanish Loyalists were now also becoming restive. Our administration, therefore, had to ask him to go. The professor then gave all his attention to working out a face-saving formula by which he could retire. The formula was that the Salzburg climate led to a recurrence of his rheumatism. This was absurd, since by then rumors of the situation had leaked through all the Seminar, even to the younger Germans with whom he thought he was saving his face. But he was satisfied, in his unbounded obtuseness, and left.

Only near the end of our stay did it become clear what effect the episode had had upon the other Germans. The most earnest of their social scientists came to my room one day, and said he wanted to give his impressions of the Seminar. His manner was much too formal for the occasion, but what he had on his mind was not easy for him to express. It was nothing less than a deep sense of gratitude. When the German professor had left, he too had felt implicated, had felt that he and the other Germans could not really be accepted here by anyone. Then one afternoon, in the economics seminar, he had found himself exchanging ideas on his own special subject in mathematical theory with a Dutchman and a Dane. At the close of the session, they continued the discussion, just the three of them, still sitting at the table. At that moment he felt something give way inside. He was no longer outlawed. He had been spoken to as a man. After that he was able to relax with some of the others. And now, in his bespectacled gray face, there was less grimness, and he smiled as he showed me a snapshot of his wife and two blond boys. Somehow I had not thought of his having any close contacts with life; but there they were, the thin serious wife and the two very blond laughing boys.

He got to laughing and singing a little himself during the last days of the Seminar. With the courses over, we managed to get a couple of busses for an excursion to the Gross Glockner. That was the kind of occasion which made him feel at home. He had a map, he had his camera, and his new sense of release took the form of organizing the party, of pointing out the views, of grouping us for

our photos against the Glacier. He became something of a bore. He had been in better form that day in my room when he was not quite so released. But he had grasped anew what Hawthorne called 'the magnetic chain of humanity,' and its life-giving shock was more exhilarating than he could quite handle at first. His smile was easier the next day when he said good-bye, holding his violin case under his arm.

The other half of the picture was rounded out by the most responsible of the Danes. He had had a letter from home, and was deeply troubled. The letter came from one of his most respected professors, who felt that the Danish students at Salzburg had acted unjustly. The German professor was hopelessly undeveloped in human relations, to be sure, but he was not a Nazi. In treating him as they had, were they not breeding all over again the same malignant disease of intolerance and persecution?

As he talked about the letter, the tall blond angular Danish student had difficulty finding the right English words. He had never had this trouble when his mind was at ease. He paused for a moment, and then summed up what he most wanted to say: 'A just man must go on the theory that it is better for ninety-nine guilty to escape than that one innocent man should be punished.'

That old formula took on new weight as he continued, hesitatingly, to describe his relations with the German economist in his seminar. Before coming to Salzburg, his last contact with a German had been with a Gestapo agent, who had hit him in the face. When he had found at the Seminar that he was quartered in the same dormitory room as two Germans, he had instinctively turned his back when they first passed. Then he felt ashamed. That was not what he had come here to do. He struggled with himself, but hardly got farther than brief good mornings, until that day when he found that he and the German student were both interested in the same topic. After that they had talked about music and other things as well. It was clearly not a case of liking in any intimate sense. It was in fact something more difficult to attain, the sense of forbearance and trust without which no mature communication is possible.

Hardly an event of great magnitude, simply an interchange between two individuals. Yet this fine, self-contained Dane, with

his exquisite sense of justice, had enabled the German to find again what Goethe meant in aspiring to be a citizen of the world. Goethe had learned it from Voltaire, and could, for that matter, have learned it from Ben Franklin.

¶ 'Once you've decided, the way the War and State Departments have, that the Soviet Union is bent upon world domination, then your course is perfectly clear. It's just a question of tactics.'

We were sitting over our brandies in the sun, on the edge of one of the most brilliant little Austrian lakes, in the garden of what had once been the summer home of some rich Viennese. Now it was being used as a week-end spot by one of the younger attachés to our legation. We had been served a lunch including both lobster and beef, and two kinds of wine. The group of ten had, except for a couple of us from Salzburg, all come over from Vienna. The man from the State Department who was talking, and who had done graduate work in sociology in America, continued in his firm, clipped voice. It was all perfectly clear. It was either we or they, and no mistake about it. I wanted to hear his reasons, but the wives were beginning to get bored. One delivered an acid anecdote about a Communist who had stolen some furs. Another said, 'Oh, you're not going to get serious, are you?' If you are, I'll go for a swim.'

They had never left home. The four men, between thirty-five and fifty, were all intelligent, lawyers and businessmen with a sharp grasp on the immediate facts of their jobs and with no concern beyond that range. Living as they did, they had almost no contact with Austrians outside their offices. And the Russians were our adversaries on the other side of the wall. We might have been spending a pleasant afternoon at the nineteenth hole of any country club in the States. Apparently it can give you a fine feeling of security to know what the War Department and the State Department have decided. Then you don't have to think about it any more. But if it is so clearly settled that it's going to be we and not they who prevail, how magnetic an image of life would our country club be for the millions of Europeans who have never visited one?

(Dick Campbell managed to persuade Herr Russinger to take a day off for our big expedition to the Gross Glockner. Herr Russinger's wife had been there once with the Reinhardts, but he had never gone. He dug out his Tyrolean jacket and hat for the occasion, and sat by himself at the back of the bus. But he had brought along a considerably more substantial meal than the two sandwiches Herr Pomper had provided for the rest of us. When we were at the Glacier, I tried to engage him in conversation, but got nothing more than: 'Schön, aber sehr luftig.' But those eyes didn't miss much.

(The moment when I understood most fully what the Seminar had done came just before our last musical evening. This was Clemens Heller's biggest occasion, a party in honor of Hindemith, whose music was performed by a group from the Mozarteum, in honor too of Helene Thimig and the cast of *Jedermann*. This was the kind of gala night that Herr Russinger remembered most happily from Reinhardt's time. But, as all of cultural Salzburg began to arrive, I felt a twinge of resentment that our castle was being invaded. Vittorio Gabrieli agreed that this strange castle had come to seem our own, and so we took refuge in the kitchen, where we shared a bottle of wine in the midst of the Pomper's hurried preparations for the party.

Vittorio began to talk about what it had meant to have all your education during the period of Mussolini. Never once, after he had begun to think, had he felt either at school or college that he could discuss anything freely, either with his teachers or with his fellow students. There were always the questions: who might overhear, who might repeat, who could be trusted? His grave aquiline face was even graver as he talked, but then it lighted up: 'I suppose that I've had more discussions of matters of real importance to me during these weeks here than during all the rest of my life.'

He went on to say that he had gained a new confidence in his work, a belief that it was worth doing, whatever the odds. During the next days, as the group began to disperse, these words of Vittorio's gave me renewed and stronger conviction of the truth that Emerson so persuasively asserts, that thought can be action. We had been living here, a group of the poor scholars for whom

Thoreau wrote especially, some of the Europeans with their only clothes on their backs and with no money at all that they could bring across the frontiers of their countries. We had been living on a diet mostly of bread and potatoes, with always the question of what might happen if our next food car from Switzerland did not arrive on schedule. But most of us had managed to disregard even the *ersatz* coffee and the dwindling rations of cigarettes. We had a sense of creating a new Abbey of Theleme. Or, to stick to the New England analogy, here was our Brook Farm, here was our ideal communistic experiment, where each—to borrow the words of a man who went farther than Fourier—gave according to his abilities, and received according to his needs.

At the very end we divided up the library so that it could be carried away to as many student centers as possible. I began to pack my own souvenirs: Baldini's edition of 'Poe; the book of Loyalist poems printed by the Spanish students; a translation of some of *Leaves of Grass* into Hungarian; a selection of modern Austrian poetry from Leopold Rosenmayr, who is doing an anthology of English and American religious poetry, and to whom I am to send the poems of Robert Lowell; a book of poems by Paula von Preradovic, the mother of Otto and Fritz Molden; a tiny enamel Finnish flag from Anni Halme. And I felt that it would be hard to overestimate the waves of diffusion from this core that we had constructed.

All summer our enchanted garden had seemed on the edge of a precipice. Ever since that summer day of Hiroshima it has been almost impossible to feel that anything we do is permanent. And here, in Central Europe, in an occupied, depleted country between West and East, no one can have the sense of living much more than from day to day. Yet at the heart of our disillusion was the conviction that we had re-created together, a conviction of the dignity and power of the intellectual. Hardly more than a hundred men and women, some already worn beyond their years, we were nevertheless going back to our many countries with a renewed belief in the possibility of communication. We were carrying with us too the belief that there was much we could still do, by our speaking and writing, to cut through prejudice, to destroy the barriers of ignorance and hate that otherwise will destroy us all.

Interlude

Between Assignments

(¶ When I said good-bye to Dick and Clemens and left for Paris on the Arlberg Express, I thanked them for providing the best milieu for teaching that I have ever known. If you want to be a teacher in a large university in America, you are working against the grain. You may have, to be sure, at a place like Harvard, the great reward of knowing that the best you can offer as a lecturer will always find students more than ready to receive it. But promotions depend hardly at all on teaching. If you have published a lot of something impressive-looking and are also a good teacher, of course it won't be held against you. But if you aren't a good teacher, yet have the right number of learned articles, your career won't be impeded. Once you have learned these things, what advice can you give to younger colleagues who have entered the teaching profession because they want to teach?

Most of our big institutions seem as lacking in a sense of intellectual community as Henry Adams and William James found Harvard to be. One should not underestimate the freedom provided at Harvard, once you have a job, to do that job in your own way, without interference. Indeed, defenders of free enterprise in other fields might well find that state the *summum bonum*. But I doubt that the results are as good as American society has a right to expect. In the late nineteen-thirties, when some of the younger professors were pressing for more democratic procedure in the government of

the University, President Conant once countered by saying that he regarded the professors as analogous to the senior partners in a law firm. I questioned the analogy then, and it has become even less accurate since.

The case of Raymond Walsh and Alan Sweezy is an instance to the point. When these two younger economists were not reappointed by their department, there was a widespread faculty protest that they might have been let go because of their liberal political opinions. Mr. Conant yielded to the protest, and appointed an eminent committee from the faculty to investigate the case. After a year's study, this committee presented a masterly report. Its authors included Felix Frankfurter, Ralph Barton Perry, Harlow Shapley, Arthur Meier Schlesinger, and Kenneth Murdock. They recommended that the two men be reinstated. Even though leadership in the Teachers Union, say, had not been held directly against them, it had certainly helped to condition the minds of senior members of their department, who at that time viewed with suspicion any adherence to the economic policies of the New Deal. President Conant thanked the committee for its work, but found its recommendation 'unwise and impractical.'

Deans have multiplied greatly since then, a little managerial revolution may have taken place, but the ordinary professor shares little or none of the planning role of a partner. This does not apply merely to me who, according to my friend Ted Spencer, have combined in my relations with the Harvard administration the qualities of a hedgehog and a cannon ball. Nor is it the case that I am so far out in left field that I couldn't be expected to see very clearly what is happening at home plate. For it applies also to those at center and right. It is part of the system into which we have drifted from the time when educators were still responsible for shaping the policies of education. The policies have for long now been shaped by the president and deans in conjunction with the businessmen and lawyers who make up the typical group of trustees. The individual teacher is scarcely more than a hired hand.

He can have, to be sure, the deep satisfaction of doing his job well, but often in crippling isolation. Under this kind of autocratic system—no matter how benevolent in administration—the teacher often feels, even in his own department, like a very lonely wolf in

be with the small university, where the presence both of elementary and advanced students would attract a more variegated faculty, and would make for a more matured community.

Those who shared in discussing with Paul Sweezy the prospectus he drew up last winter, at the time when it seemed that Brandeis University might take the lead in this kind of experiment, came to this conclusion. The starting point would be a combined faculty and student body small enough to feel that they really could become a community concerned not merely with abstract disciplines of mind, but with a living interchange of feelings and beliefs. The exact size is not important, though at first its students should not number more than five or six hundred, so that its sense of wholeness could develop. What is most important is to have a much higher proportion than usual of faculty to student body. A faculty of a hundred would be large enough for great diversity, but small enough to work together and to avoid the sterilizing division into air-tight compartments. This faculty would need to exercise its skills in democratic government, since the faculty would also be responsible for electing its trustees, instead of letting them become self-perpetuating.

There would of course be both men and women in the faculty and the student body. There would be no discriminatory quotas of any kind. This would bring to the institution a great asset in the number of highly qualified Jews who now encounter difficulty, at so many of our institutions, in finding more than an occasional appointment. And Negro teachers and scholars, who have heretofore been almost entirely excluded from our official academic life, would have a full opportunity to take their rightful place.

This is no Utopia dreamed up as a result of the special circumstances at Salzburg. It corresponds to what many, in and out of our present universities, have been thinking for some time. If such a university came into existence, it could command at once, especially among scholars under forty-five, as distinguished a faculty as any in the country. All it needs is an endowment. It would require an excellent library, a well-equipped press, facilities for music and art, a small theater, and salaries for our scholars commensurate with the highest levels elsewhere. Our benefactors could have the satisfaction of adding a new chapter to American education, such a

chapter as made Johns Hopkins under Gilman a far more stimulating and provocative experience than Yale under Noah Porter, or even Harvard under Eliot.

([During all these solemn thoughts about education I have been having flash-backs to my own. Whatever it may have been for others, Yale at the beginning of the nineteen-twenties was a major experience for me. If you came there from Groton, Yale's elementary courses were a let-down, since you had already been exposed to a richer cultural background. If you came with the big group from Andover, you were a college man already and were inflicted almost inevitably with the responsibility of setting the right social tone. You aimed for the right social goals, you wore the right Brooks suit, your soft white shirt had a buttoned-down collar, and you did nothing—except possibly drinking—to excess. But if you came from a high school or, as I did, from a small prep school that had prepared well for the college entrance examinations but had taught you nothing else, you had the giddy sensation of a limitless domain opening out before you.]

My tastes were entirely undeveloped, and I had no clear idea of what I wanted to study. I had done best in mathematics at school, so I thought I might major in that. The only reading I can recollect outside class at Hackley School was the series beginning with Baseball Joe of the Silver Stars, who finally became the winning pitcher for the Giants. But at Yale, even before I had mastered the proper way of wearing your hat and walking down Chapel Street, I found an English instructor who showed me what I most wanted to learn. Bob French's official subject began with Shakespeare and went on to some prose and poetry of the nineteenth century. But he taught me much more.

One day, when I was waiting outside his office for a conference on my first theme, I overheard what he was saying to another student, the son of a Jewish immigrant. 'You've come to Yale for an education. You probably don't realize it, but you can't yet speak the English language. That would be a great handicap for you later on, so you had better begin to correct what you say now.'

I had never before encountered this kind of frankness from a teacher. This was painful truth, but Bob French said it with such

sensitiveness and skill that it gave no offense. It opened the doors for a real relationship. When I decided, as a senior, that I wanted to teach, Bob French's candor and devotion were my model.

By then I had studied under many other good teachers, for Yale, whatever its shortcomings, was still enough of a community to have preserved a tradition of teaching, of making its distinguished men available to its elementary students. The great biologist Lorand Woodruff, for instance, offered the general introduction to his field. Thus I received a first-hand contact with scientific method which was not routine, and which gave me some inside knowledge of its discipline. The chance of studying under Chauncey Tinker in the sophomore course in great authors carried me farther along the road upon which the reading for Bob French had started me. But probably an even stronger influence in making me realize that literature was what I cared for most was that I had met by then several classmates who were contributing to the *Lit*, and I was myself also trying to write.

For anyone as unformed as I was, a good deal depended on accidents. One of the oddest of these came through the course in elementary economics, which I took because I was required to, and hated. The instructor's presentation of the text-book was routine, and the law of supply and demand left me cold. But you could get extra credit by writing a report on some book on a supplementary list. Not wanting to risk disaster, I decided to do this. None of the names of the books meant anything to my ignorance, but when I came to one called *The Acquisitive Society*, the title struck me as so unusual that I chose it. There could have been no luckier opening of the door into social theory. Tawney's ideas about equality have remained more living for me than anything else, except Shakespeare, that I read at college.

Yale in those years gave the sense of living on a grand scale through the world that my friends made for themselves and me. We were there just after Archibald MacLeish and Phelps Putnam and Stephen Benét, and could imagine that we too were sharing in what we called, with no inhibiting modesty, 'the Yale renaissance.' Talk at the Elizabethan Club, whether it was about Monty Woolley's production of *The Playboy of the Western World*, or

Robinson's poetry, or the last football game we had lost, was sure to be good talk.

About half our class had had some service in the war, but we were all young enough to feel the new promise in American life. We even took our cynicism with gusto. We were strong for the lost cause of the League of Nations, and supported disarmament in the Liberal Club in which Russell Davenport and Jerry Voorhis and I were officers. Years later, in *America's Sixty Families*, several familiar names brought home to me how free and easy and innocent our Yale world had been. We had discussed Bertrand Russell's *Four Roads to Freedom*, and might even have read a little Marx, but that called up no invidious implications against classmates. A Yale college class then still numbered only about three hundred, and we embraced the tradition that we were a democratic entity. To others more mature than myself, and less bemused by discovering so many new things all at once, the signs of special privilege must have been more apparent.

I discovered with some surprise that a college may have the effect of separating you from life outside instead of bringing you closer to it. I had volunteered to teach English to a group at the New Haven Hungarian Club who wanted to qualify for their citizenship papers. These men had a serious awe before the possibility of the education which I had grown up taking for granted. Most of them were double my age, but by the end of the lessons we had achieved something close to friendship. After the last session, one of the men suggested, with a sly wink, that I might like to see the rest of their building. They took me down cellar where each one had been fermenting his own cask of prohibition wine. We sampled several, with a good deal of ceremony, and the stars seemed unusually bright as I walked back to the Yale Campus. I had felt in the natural and hearty comradeship of these men a quality that I was just beginning to suspect might be bleached out of middle-class college graduates. It was a kind of comradeship I wanted never to lose.

¶ It is appalling how much can get left out of an American education. It was not until I had begun to be an instructor at Harvard that I read Francis Parkman's history, and

found that Starved Rock and the Illinois river where I had gone canoeing near my grandfather's house was the scene of some of the most vivid pages in *La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West*. La Salle had been simply the name of my grandfather's town. That it was the name also of a French explorer was lodged somewhere abstractly in my memory, but I had not had the irreplaceable experience of sharing, as a boy, in a rich consciousness of history. No school that I attended went at all imaginatively into the American past.

The dams of isolation that block the flow of a living culture are often erected unwittingly. Not until the death of Charles Griffes, in the flu epidemic of 1919, did I begin to realize that this shy bird-like little man who directed the choir and gave music lessons at Hackley was also a composer. In the barren atmosphere of a conventional boys' school, that was apparently not assumed to be a matter of interest. Yet, many years later, I read in Griffes' biography the record of his loneliness and frustration. In the winter of my last year at school, Charles Griffes, at the end of another corridor in the same building, was reading Dostoevsky and Flaubert. Even if I was not ready for them at sixteen, there is an unforgivable wastage in any institution where the important things are never even mentioned, and where communication withers through disuse.

A good deal of everyone's later education consists of compensating for what he missed, and of having to unlearn what he was taught. And on any mature level one often learns most through opposition. By far the most living experience in my graduate study at Harvard came through the lectures of Irving Babbitt, with whose neo-humanistic attack upon the modern world I disagreed at nearly every point. The vigor with which he objected to almost every author since the eighteenth century forced me to fight for my tastes, which grew stronger by the exercise. And I realize now, as I look forward to *Britannicus* at the Comédie Française this evening, that he also gave me my first appreciation of Racine.

(Europe has always had the effect of making me take stock of my political opinions. In the fall of 1923, when I went to Oxford, I joined the Labour Club as a matter of course, since Tawney and Bertrand Russell had prepared me for it. If I

had been in America the next fall, I would have had a chance to cast my first vote, and it would have gone to La Follette. In the spring, four years before, when Harding had been nominated, I was just finishing my Freshman year at Yale, and I can remember my astonishment when Bob French came out with his statement, in connection with the student straw vote, that with such nominees as Cox and Harding, it was necessary to support Debs, if only in protest. I suddenly realized that at the nice schools I had attended there were hardly any boys who weren't Republicans. The New York senator who was the father of a Hackley classmate was a Republican, of course, and my grandfather, who had been mayor of his Illinois town for several years, was on the best of terms with Governor Frank O. Lowden. I was too young or too ignorant, even in 1916, to have been persuaded by Wilson.

I had not previously encountered any such thought as Bob French's and, much as I admired him, I resisted it at first. My line of reasoning was that Bob French's stand took both intelligence and courage—he was frowned upon by the Yale community for it—but that it was all his idea and not mine, and that if I followed it, I would simply be acting unconventional for the sake of the gesture. So I cast my straw vote for Harding, along with about 85 per cent of the rest of Yale.

But this new thought gave me the kind of shock of which education consists: a recognition of realms entirely outside the narrow limits with which I had been surrounded. Within a couple of years, after gaining some more knowledge of the forces in American society, and as a result particularly of my friendship with Jerry Voorhis and of his grasp of Henry George's analysis of poverty, I was supporting Debs, not out of protest, but because I believed he was right. On the questionnaire for our Senior Class Album I didn't call myself a Socialist, but an Independent. Yet the Sunday afternoon that spring when I heard Debs speak at a New Haven labor hall was for me a great event. His speech wasn't anything remarkable, for he was very tired. But white and worn-out as he looked, he still conveyed a broad dignity and warmth that showed me for the first time what a people's leader could be.

I had already met Norman Thomas, since he had accepted the invitation of our Yale Liberal Club, and had talked to us with

serious animation. His views were very different from those of our Yale professors, but he was still a kind of professor all the same. When I came back from Oxford and followed the British general strike from the Harvard graduate school, I began to feel increasingly our lack of a labor party. I continued to respect Thomas, but he never served to do much more than educate some middle-class intellectuals. He was never able, like Debs, to command a real mass movement. Consequently, in the campaign of '28, when Al Smith brought with him the earthiness of a seasoned popular campaigner, here was a Democrat whom I could support. I voted for him, in hearty protest against the dry respectable world of the financiers and lawyers I had come to know through Yale, against the world of the reactionary mining engineer whom Veblen had by then helped me to see through.

In '32, with the depression at its worst, I thought that here at last was a chance for the Socialists to regain the broad base they had developed under Debs, and I joined the party. Roosevelt's speeches during that campaign struck me as little more than the promises of a Harvard man who wanted very much to be President, and I had not gauged the sweep of middle and lower-middle class reaction against Hooverism that turned the rascals out. Roosevelt in office was something quite other than I had foreseen, and after he began to effect even some of the things for which Thomas had stood, I voted for him enthusiastically, though always from the left, until his death.

This was not the same as having a party to belong to in the European sense, a labor party with a trade-union base to which an intellectual could adhere with the realization that he could learn the first-hand facts of economic organization from this contact, and could then, in turn, be of some use in helping to provide ideas for leadership. But the New Deal took several strides in that direction, it brought far more able brains into government, and, with the rise of the CIO, the labor base assumed more solid form. By 1935 Alan and Paul Sweezy, Bob Lamb, Ray Walsh, Lewis Feuer, David Prall, Ernest Simmons, Kirtley Mather, Sprague Coolidge, and a couple of dozen more of us at Harvard had responded to the spirit of the time to the extent of organizing a local of the Teachers Union at Harvard. We thereby joined the AFL,

which had started a union for high-school teachers twenty years before. We took this action primarily because we felt that members of the Harvard faculty were far too detached from each other and from any contact with the outside community. By affirming the aims we held in common with the newly progressive labor movement we could demonstrate the falseness of the division between workers with their brains and workers with their hands, and could gain a deeper sense of being a functional part of society.

We at once began to learn a lot. We came to know the teachers in the high-school locals in Boston, Lawrence, Lowell, New Bedford, and Springfield. For the first time we had an inside acquaintance with how the school system works in the state and what problems it is up against. Through our delegations to the Cambridge and Boston Central Labor Unions we got an immediate education in the industrial composition of the city, knowledge which the almost complete isolation of Harvard Yard from Central Square generally prevents the inhabitants of Widener Library from even glimpsing. We found all sorts of small jobs in which we could be of use: other unions' problems, on which some of our economists could give advice, issues in local government to be supported or fought, questions concerning the school committee or the one or two struggling Cambridge co-operatives or the possibility of local socialized medicine. We also grew to learn the necessity of being better informed about what was taking place in the State House, and gained experience in lobbying and in testifying for or against various bills. The first time our activities made the headlines was when Ray Walsh made a courageous speech against ex-President Lowell's notorious opposition to any child labor legislation.

That was the kind of issue that dramatized our difference from traditional Harvard. Mr. Lowell was against such legislation since it might lead to other interference with the rights of free enterprise. His financial sense was very keen, but otherwise his perceptions of the community were those of the patronizing aristocrat. Irish politicians were an evil to be put up with at a distance, and as for other foreign and disturbing elements—well, there had been those two Italian anarchists, and he remained sure to the end of his life that he had been right in sending them to their deaths.

Within the Harvard of the Lowell tradition a union was and is

an anomaly. One of the best things to be said about that Harvard, to be sure, is its preservation of individual freedoms. Mr. Lowell, for instance, had backed up Harold Laski when, as a visiting lecturer, he was viciously attacked during the red scare of 1919. But in the nineteen-thirties many of us were no longer satisfied with academic freedom in the void. We believed that we had responsibilities as citizens which could be fulfilled only through group action. By joining together in a union, we grew to understand better our aims and how to effect them. Within Harvard we lost on many specific issues. But even though the Walsh-Sweezy case was a defeat, through it we were the spearhead in the attainment of a far more equitable system of tenure and promotion. For more than a decade now, even though our membership has seldom been much above a hundred and often less, we have been the center of whatever progressive social action has arisen in the university. By the mere fact of existing we have become a rallying point against the apathy and inertia which, since Roosevelt's death, have been quietly smothering so many intellectuals.

([The nineteen-thirties now appear in retrospect as a period when a considerable number of intellectuals commuted to radicalism and back. It was a time when writers, shaken by the depression, became Communists overnight, in a way that I always found difficult to follow. It is easy to say with hindsight, in the cliché of the period, that 'they didn't know enough economics,' and consequently weren't reliable in their embrace of socialism, were always likely to fall away when the going got tough. But I needn't pretend that I know any more economics than, say, John Dos Passos or Granville Hicks. The latter's membership in the Communist Party was never persuasive to me, since, to judge by his writing in *The New Masses*, it always seemed so thinly theoretical, so lacking in a full grasp either of American or of Soviet life. But it was far more cogent than his recent retirement to a neo-liberalism which has no group adherences, a liberalism wholly of the mind. The development of Dos Passos is even more baffling. Throughout *U.S.A.* he diagnosed so trenchantly the evils of finance capitalism that his novel became one of the serious contributions to the social history of our time. Yet now he takes

refuge in a return to Jefferson's eighteenth-century ideas as 'the ground we stand on.' They were the ground we stood on a long time ago, before the industrial transformation of our modern world. Whatever objective reasons compelled towards socialism in the nineteen-thirties seem even more compelling now, and it is the responsibility of the intellectual to rediscover and rearticulate that fact.

If I lived in France, I don't quite see how I could help being a Communist. I put that thought in its barest form, since my attendance last week at a Sunday fête champêtre, staged by *L'Humanité* on the outskirts of Paris, started these reflections on politics. The impressive and heartening thing, so lacking in most intellectuals' efforts to belong to a radical party in America, was the sense you could have, in that throng, of almost a million men and women from all over France, of really being joined with a people's movement. The people were not an abstraction in an editorial, they were there on the grass with their bottles of wine and bread, they were there to take part in the raffle of a desperate-looking chicken at one of the dozens of little booths. They were there to laugh with the Fratellinis and to sing workers' songs and finally to listen to speeches from a platform some half a mile away from the outer edges of the crowd.

It's easy to be a sucker for French vitality and gaiety. Much of the atmosphere was not very different from a Labor Day picnic or a county fair at home, and many of the same reasons that have made it impossible for me to be a Communist elsewhere still apply. One of my French Socialist friends from the resistance movement insists upon the Communists' indifference to the dignity of the individual, their willingness to sacrifice anyone to the rigid exigencies of the ever taut, yet ever changing party line. But I cannot forget that in France, where most official Socialists have now lost their direction through timidity, the younger thinkers among the Communists, joined with the trade-union leaders, are now keeping the revolution alive.

In England my choice would be simple, just as it was twenty-five years ago. As a supporter of the younger left-wing group in the Labour Party, I would feel the kind of close allegiance that comes from affiliation with a movement in which one knows that he can

fulfil a definite function. I sensed this all over again when a couple of days ago Harold Laski made it possible for me to witness the final stages of a by-election in Islington, one of the poorer boroughs of London. I spent several hours at the Committee Rooms, and accompanied Albert Evans on the round of meetings at which he spoke on the night before polling day. I felt at once that I belonged in this atmosphere. The candidate was a union man, an engraver by trade, a lifelong resident of the borough. He spoke with a solid confidence in the demonstrable gains in well-being that Islington had already made under the Labour Government, since, even with all the restrictions, and rationing, its people were better fed than they had ever been. Evans' campaign was being carried forward by other union men and by university intellectuals, working together with an intimate and unself-conscious sense of a common cause. A difficulty in America, with no labor party committed to socialism, is that an intellectual who is sympathetic with the labor movement still often finds himself regarded as a doubtful asset, as a 'red' who may turn out to be a source of embarrassment.

Except in New York City or Minnesota, as it was during the period of Floyd Olson and Elmer Benson, you can hardly have the sense that you are joined with a labor party at all. The Socialist Party since the mid-thirties has devoted much of its waning strength to factional bickering. When all the forces on the left are as weak in numbers as they are in America, it seems hardly less than suicidal to waste so much of their energy in attacking one another. The Trotskyite-Stalinist struggle, when transferred to New York, has yielded, to judge by the total record of the chief writers involved, little more than sterile though heated debate, followed by a wearied disillusionment with all politics on the part of many who once believed that they stood farthest to the militant left.

The record of literary radicals throughout this generation has been painfully erratic, and can be accounted for only as a result of the immense, often unbearable pressures making for violence and chaos. The case of André Malraux is among the hardest to understand. That the author of *Man's Fate* and *Man's Hope* might be disillusioned after the events in China and in Spain would hardly be a cause for wonder. If, as a result of the unending strain on his nervous system during the period of the resistance, he had with-

drawn from action altogether, that would be comprehensible. But that he should now commit himself, if only, as may still be hoped, as a passing aberration, to the cause of an *ersatz* Fascist like General de Gaulle, is the kind of act that can hardly yield any explanation beyond personal sickness. One cannot imagine otherwise what Malraux meant by putting into the mouth of Garcia, the intellectual Communist in *Man's Hope*, the statement that the aim of all life's purposive action should be the conversion of as much experience as possible into conscious thought. That remark was directed against the anti-intellectualism of the Nazis. And it is almost a paraphrase of the central conviction of William James.

It is not hard to understand some of the disillusionment of those who have run up against Communist tactics in various parts of the world. There were reasons to respect Arthur Koestler, not only as a reporter of the Civil War in Spain and of what the fall of France felt like to one involved in it, but also as the fictional projector, in *Darkness at Noon*, of some of the terrible issues of liberty in the wake of the Soviet revolution. But I cannot comprehend the jaunty tone and the psychological jargon of his more recent journalistic pieces, in which the major tensions of our era are all treated with the bright facile negativism that one expects only from those New York writers whose thought has never been nourished by first-hand participation in social action either abroad or at home.

The nihilism that seems to overtake ex-Trotskyites is a poison that need not contaminate anyone else. Yet I still feel that I could never become a member of the Stalinist party in America. My separation from it has always been on double grounds. In the first place, it has made hardly any progress, during more than a quarter of a century, in enlisting real mass support. This would seem to indicate that its ideology is rigid instead of resilient, that its leaders have been mechanical Marxists whose formulas have not corresponded to the shaping actualities of American existence. Their stand on specific issues has often been courageous and trenchant. But then the line suddenly changed, and they were no longer talking about everyday life in Illinois or New Mexico or Massachusetts—or New York—but about an abstraction geared to Union Square.

If it was merely the question of a movement's not being sufficiently representative, you might take the position that it was your duty to join it and thereby add what you could towards making it more so. But my other grounds are deeper, and separate me from most of my radical friends. They are the grounds that keep me from being a Marxist in any sense, no matter how much my thought has been influenced by Marx. I am a Christian, not through upbringing but by conviction, and I find any materialism inadequate. I make no pretense of being a theologian, but I have been influenced by the same Protestant revival that has been voiced most forcefully in America by Reinhold Niebuhr. That is to say, I have rejected the nineteenth-century belief in every man as his own Messiah, along with the other aberrations of that century's individualism; and I have accepted the doctrine of original sin, in the sense that man is fallible and limited, no matter what his social system, and is capable of finding completion only through humility before the love of God.

Such doctrines have often been pronounced meaningless by my radical friends; and I, in turn, have felt a shallowness in their psychology whenever they have talked as though man was perfectible, with evil wholly external to his nature, and caused only by the frustrations of the capitalist system. Shakespeare and Melville are witness enough that man is both good and evil.

But I would differ from most orthodox Christians today, and particularly from the tradition represented by T. S. Eliot, in that, whatever the imperfections of man, the second of the two great commandments, to love thy neighbor as thyself, seems to me an imperative to social action. Evil is not merely external, but external evils are many, and some social systems are far more productive of them than others. Thus my philosophical position is of the simplest. It is as a Christian that I find my strongest propulsion to being a socialist. I would call myself a Christian Socialist, except for the stale and reactionary connotations that the term has acquired through its current use by European parties.

What gives the central drive to my desire to find a political position to correspond to my philosophy is that, unlike most Christian Socialists, I accept the Russian Revolution as the most progressive event of our century, the necessary successor to the

French Revolution and the American Revolution and to England's seventeenth-century Civil War. The discipline of history seems valuable only if it can enable you to perceive and to hold fast to such broad analogies, even to the extent of recognizing that the iron age of disillusionment which descended upon so many European intellectuals after the excesses of Robespierre was no less somber and hard than our own. Let us grant that it was unfortunate that our revolution had to take place in Russia, a country backward in economic and political development, with a brutal tradition of Czarist oppression and of secret police which could hardly fail to leave some disfiguring mark on its immediate successors. But we do not have the luxury of choice in the place and conditions for a revolution. Revolutions happen because conditions have become so insupportable that the people are driven to right them by whatever violent means. But they also happen only when the people and their leaders possess a sufficiently defined goal which they hope to achieve, and the vitality and courage to drive towards it.

In the early nineteenth century plenty of turncoat liberals rejoined the reactionaries in deploring that the French Revolution had ever happened. But writers like Hazlitt and Michelet held fast to the fact that unless one accepted the Revolution, that is to say, the reasons why it had become necessary and the goals it had aimed at, one could not begin to understand the meaning of modern history. For the core of that meaning lay in a fundamental change in conception: from man as subject to man as citizen. The comparable acceptance required by twentieth-century history is to recognize that, owing to the vast developments in industrialization, political revolution now can and must be completed by an economic revolution. It must be so completed because we have now learned that otherwise the immense concentration of wealth in a few hands makes for a renewed form of tyranny. This is the truth we grasped through the theory and practice of Lenin. It would be the worst folly to lose sight of it, no matter what aberrations from or distortions of it have occurred in the special circumstances of current Russia. And the Russians, whatever their failures in practice so far, however short they may have fallen of some of Lenin's aims through the grim pressures of dictatorship, have not been deflected from the right of all to share in the common wealth.

This was a right insisted upon by Walt Whitman and Henry George no less than by Marx and Lenin. But in present-day America, the one time when I have felt that there was a chance to share in the direct political implementation of such views was during the rise of the Citizens Political Action Committee in the presidential campaign of 1944. Here at last there seemed to be the kind of organization through which middle-class intellectuals and white-collar workers sympathetic with the labor movement could cooperate in forwarding their common aims. I had worked with many liberal groups of good will, but had come to share Lincoln Steffens' doubts of their permanent accomplishments. For without a strong ballast, such as organized labor alone can provide, these groups soon get lost in an idealistic void. By allying ourselves as closely as possible with the progressive membership of the unions, we gain the kind of discipline that has so often been lacking among American reformers—the first-hand discipline of knowing what is actually going on in the minds of the people, and of what, therefore, is feasible. Only after thorough immersion in that knowledge is any intellectual able to offer the kind of help for which his particular gifts have fitted him.

The Massachusetts Citizens PAC was set up on a shoestring, but we found that there were throughout the state many supporters of the New Deal who were willing to give the time to build local chapters, and, in Boston, ward and precinct chapters too. Such a closely sub-divided structure is surely the only kind that can hope for success in American politics. We were from the start independent in our organization and policy-making from the CIO-PAC, but on most issues we were in agreement. Like them we concentrated on broad matters of national policy and also on concrete local problems like housing and rent control. We accomplished and still are accomplishing a great deal in a step-by-step way. But instability has characterized America since President Roosevelt's death, and this has manifested itself in the CIO's own wavering from its course of political action after the setbacks in the congressional campaign of 1946. For the time being, therefore, the Citizens PAC was no longer allied with a comparable organization in the labor movement. Again it ran all the risks of being a group of professional

liberals, professional only in the sense of their long commitment to causes, but deplorably amateurish in the wide diffusion of their hopes beyond any possibilities of fulfilment.

The whole problem of our leadership is dramatized, of course, by the controversial figure of Henry Wallace. The capitalist press has united to try to make him seem a ridiculous dreamer—happy Henry, the man in the moon. This has gradually had its effect even upon many former New Dealers who have come to speak with embarrassment of Wallace's vagueness and impracticality, and to deplore that they have no better leader. But his impracticality is steadily denied by all who have worked closely with him since his first days in the Department of Agriculture. And it is salutary to recall the close parallel between the attacks upon Wallace and those made upon Jefferson at every stage of his public career. For, without pressing the comparison to full equality of stature, Wallace is emphatically a successor in the Jeffersonian tradition, the great tradition of fearlessly introducing major principles into political discussion. Wallace would undoubtedly make the same kind of President that Jefferson did, fiercely attacked on situation after situation, but emerging in retrospect as one of the few broad and seriously humane minds in our presidential history. It is already apparent that when the history of the New Deal comes to be written, Wallace's pronouncements on several cardinal issues will be among its main contributions to democratic political and social theory.

([Meanwhile, it is possible also to speculate about a different type of political leader, a type which the labor movement should now be ripe enough to produce. Philip Murray's quiet firmness held the CIO together after the flamboyant disruptiveness of John L. Lewis, but Murray was already too old to make a direct entrance into politics. The place to look for leadership is among the younger men who have risen to prominence through the growth of the CIO. The leader I have seen at closest hand is Harry Bridges, president of the longshoremen's union, particularly during the years when repeated attempts were being made to deport him. His case was of a type very familiar to our time. Ever since his major share in defying the anti-union forces of San Fran-

cisco by the general strike of 1934, he had been the chief target for the hatred of the industrial and financial leaders there who are still strong in the vigilante tradition. They had determined to send him back to his native Australia on the charge that he was a Communist. A hearing in 1939 before Dean Landis of the Harvard Law School cleared him of that charge. Landis' report on that hearing is a masterly document in the history of the special kind of attack that is made on a man for being a red, when the real issue is not his political views but his vigorous activity in organizing labor. Even in the face of that report, the case was opened all over again a year or two later. New congressional legislation was aimed directly at Bridges, on the technicality that the ground for deportation of aliens was not confined to membership in the Communist Party, but extended to any affiliation with its supporters. At that point I became chairman of a citizens' committee to defend Bridges, and participated in the long history of the case up through its dismissal by the Supreme Court.

I spent considerable time in Harry Bridges' company, both in the East and in San Francisco, and came to admire him. He is tough, as anyone would be who has fought his way up with his longshoremen, and he can be very drastic in action. But he is entirely fearless, and during all the years he was under fire he never fell into the easy mistake of dramatizing himself as a persecuted hero. He took in his stride all the spying and wire-tapping of the FBI, and always kept emphasizing that his case was important only because it showed up so clearly the dangerous forces making for reaction.

Harry Bridges is now a citizen. He is still often attacked for following the party line, but he is quite capable of thinking for himself. He is probably too identified with the extreme left, however, to enter directly into politics in the immediate future. The more likely source to look for national leadership might well be the unions of the automobile or steel or electrical workers. They all sprang out of the depression and from the start enlisted young men of intelligence who were just finishing their school education at a time when they could see that there would be no roads ahead unless they helped build them. The best-known man to appear from

that background so far is Walter Reuther of UAW, but up to this point it is still hard to say how much he is dominated merely by personal ambition.

The essential quality is the quality Debs possessed. The only time I met William Z. Foster was at Harvard at a memorial meeting for John Reed, a short time before we were in the war. Foster had already been suffering for some years from severe heart trouble, and had to spend the hours just before his speech lying on a sofa. But he conveyed some of the same impression of strength and dignity of character that Debs did. Foster is not really a thinker, but he knew what he meant in tracing the course of his development from Bryan to Stalin, for he had shared in the main battles of the labor movement and had been forced to radical conclusions.

The most thoughtful man among the labor leaders with whom I have been acquainted is Vincent Ray Dunne of the Minnesota teamsters' union. I saw him in the summer of 1936, at the time when he and his brothers had been so effectively organizing the previously wide-open town of Minneapolis. Here was a Trotskyite I could understand, for he was essentially an Irish revolutionary who had been part of the IWW in its stormiest days, and had put his theories to the test of militant practice at every stage. After the outbreak of the war, he came to Boston on a speaking tour in a fruitless effort to appeal the prison sentence against him and several other members of the Socialist Workers Party on a charge of sedition. It seemed clear, on examination of the evidence, that the specific charges against them were very flimsy, and that—here again—a group was being railroaded to jail because of its uncompromising activities on behalf of labor.

Dunne spoke quietly but firmly. For a while after the meeting he talked about books that had meant a great deal to him, among them Hugo's *Les Misérables* and Zola's *The Downfall*. He was devoted to the values of culture, and determined that the working man should share in them. This lean spare man, charged with a condensed energy and without one waste gesture, might well be the nearest America had come to producing a Marxist leader in the selfless tradition of Lenin.

¶ The figures of Foster and Dunne can emphasize how little bearing the split between Stalin and Trotsky has upon the actual quality of our American labor leaders. Each side would of course insist that there are immense doctrinal differences walling it away from the other. But I am concerned with finding the concrete issues upon which the forces of the left can unite, and with basing those issues upon a viable political theory.

Our intellectual history has revealed greatly shifting conceptions of the individual in relation to society—what Emerson called the problem of society and solitude. In the seventeenth century, notwithstanding its strong drive for freedom of conscience and the right of individual worship, the structure of the community still followed the medieval pattern in its ineluctable emphasis upon social order. This fact was considerably obscured by nineteenth-century liberal historians, but can now be seen again in its right proportions. With the advance of the mercantilist world in the eighteenth century, the values of a Benjamin Franklin became more typical of our life than those of a John Winthrop. But Franklin also, in his common-sense approach to all matters, took it for granted that man was a social animal who reached his fulfilment through his relation to his fellows, not apart from them.

It was against the counting-house values of Franklin, to be sure, that Emerson made his strongest revolt. The effect of these values in New England had been to reduce everything to its practical measure, to leave no room for any career outside the church that did not meet the approval of the merchant and the lawyer. Emerson, sharing in the renewed consciousness of the endless amplitude of the inner life, often contrasted that rediscovered richness with the demands of a too narrow society, and found his freedom only in isolation. Thoreau, pressing even more vigorously to its extreme the doctrine latent in the Declaration of Independence, declared that that government is best which governs not at all, and became thereby our natural philosopher of anarchism.

To thinkers in the twentieth century something overwhelming is lacking in this transcendental conception of the individual. Whitehead put it succinctly: 'The self-sufficing independent man, with his peculiar property which concerns no one else, is a concept without any validity for modern civilization.' Anyone who has

grown up in America has been surrounded by countless proofs to support Whitehead's conviction. For Emerson's innocent trust in the individual as his own law, and his glowing exaltation of force and power turned out to be something quite different when the individual could rely, not only upon his own hands, but upon all the tools of the industrial movement. Force became not that of the inspired mind, but of the tough will bent on material gain; and power was not that of the uplifted spirit, but of the aggressive exploiter of the wealth of a continent. In the amassing of nearly all our great fortunes, the individual has been against the group, a law to himself to make as much as he can and to keep it however he can. The destructive effects of this practice have been written widely over our history, in the private seizure of what belonged in the public domain, in the separation of the few rich from the rest of the community. And these money-grabbers have acted as though they owed nothing to anyone except themselves. They have regarded their workers as the mere means to their ends, and have performed travesties of freedom in the name of free enterprise.

I grew up in this atmosphere, though hardly aware of it at the time, and was surrounded with just such conceptions of wealth. That was what prepared me, I suppose, to find so much in Tawney. His understanding of the nature of equality served to correct our nineteenth-century frontiersman's centrifugal conception of freedom. Tawney examined the phrase 'equality of opportunity,' upon which Jefferson so rightly insisted, and found that it is really meaningless in our society to assume that the rich boy and the poor boy can share in this equality. If economic barriers were eliminated, if the poor boy could share from the time of his birth in comparable facilities for housing and food and medical care, as well as for schooling, then he might be said to reach maturity on a footing of equal opportunity with the rich boy. Tawney thus re-emphasized what our nineteenth- and twentieth-century individualists have so often disregarded, that Jefferson insisted that men in a democracy should be both free *and* equal. But Tawney also recognized that the Jeffersonian revolution, magnificent as it was, fell short to the degree that it conceived of freedom and equality solely in political terms. Those terms must now be extended into our actual economic life.

Walt Whitman had already begun to see the same thing. For Whitman, in his haphazard sauntering through the nineteenth century, finally moved a long way from the young libertarian Democrat of the eighteen-forties who had taken fire from the *Essays* of Emerson. As he watched America during the quarter of the century after the Civil War, he saw Lincoln's hopes for true human equality being falsified by the new big industrialists of the North just as much as by the reactionaries in the South. Whitman had said long before that he wanted nothing unless everyone else could have it on the same terms; and from the time of the first great national strike, the railroad workers' strike of 1877, he moved steadily, if by no straight course, towards socialism.

What makes Whitman the central figure in our literature affirming the democratic faith is that he does full justice, as no one else does, to all three elements in the classic French articulation of that faith. Liberty and equality can remain intellectual abstractions if they are not permeated with the warmth of fraternity. The bleakness and the loneliness of so many American lives, at all economic levels, give ample testimony to that. Whitman knew, through the heartiness of his temperament, as Emerson did not, that the deepest freedom does not come from isolation. It comes instead through taking part in the common life, mingling in its hopes and failures, and helping to reach a more adequate realization of its aims, not for one alone, but for the community. Something like this was what Whitman had in mind when he said that his 'great word,' the one that moved him most, was 'solidarity.'

And so, trying to clarify my own American politics in these notes that have carried me now from Paris to London to Prague, I reaffirm allegiance to the Whitman tradition. I am a socialist, though still without a party. The term 'liberal' seems entirely unsatisfactory now, since during the period of the New Deal it was given so many different senses as almost to rob it of meaning. It signifies hardly more when used, say, in an editorial in *The New York Times*, than a gesture in the direction of the Democratic Party; or, in *The New Republic* or *PM*, as a rather evasive gesture to stall off definition of a more clear-cut position to the left; or, in *The New Masses*—depending on which way the line is running—as a gesture of conciliation or of contempt.

It would be worth while to document the semantic history of this word in American politics. Before the New Deal it had far less vogue. In our nineteenth-century political life we had no such formulated division as that between the Conservatives and Liberals in England. When the developing facts of our economy demanded some such division, the key-word seized upon by our native radical movement of the 'eighties and 'nineties, that of the Populists, was not 'liberal' but 'progressive.' That word kept its vitality through the time of La Follette, and still possesses a core of traditional meaning from our political past. Such is not to be found in the borrowed and more washy 'liberal,' which was used, I suspect, even by President Roosevelt himself, largely to render indefinitely free—and therefore as palatable as possible—some of the fundamental changes that he recognized to be essential in our economic system. The word has become increasingly weaker since Roosevelt's death, because it is now a word on the defensive. People have recourse to it in protest against a Truman or a Taft or a Dewey, in insistence upon something more in accordance with a true democracy, the positive outlines of which are still vague in their minds.

But 'progressive' is not really adequate, since out of its Populist context it also can become too vague. At the height of the New Deal, in 1936, Floyd Olson made a speech in which he said that he was glad to know at last where he stood, that he knew at last that he spoke as a radical. This came, not from a theorist out of power, but from the Governor of Minnesota. What made it possible for him to say it was the long-continued work done by the Farmer-Labor Party in carrying the Populist tradition into our century, and also the more immediate background of the rapid organization of unions in that state spearheaded by the Dunne brothers. Questions of vocabulary are always important in practical politics. The word socialist is still so foreign to most American ears that it is probably best to call yourself a radical democrat, and do whatever you can to bring about the establishment of a nation-wide American Labor Party. There may still be time.

Prague:

*October and November **

¶ The plane from London was met at the Prague airport by representatives of the Ministries of Education and Foreign Affairs, and of the Faculty of Charles University, who took me to my hotel. Petr Koubek, from the Salzburg Seminar, was also on hand, and we walked out together for the late afternoon view. We went through side streets of the Old Town, since Petr wanted to reach the river just at the point, near the Charles Bridge, where we would get the full sweep of the Cathedral standing high on its hill, irradiated by the watery autumn sun. Later we went to a little restaurant with bare wooden tables, where he told me I would eat a better steak than any I had had in England. He was right.

Still later Petr introduced me to my first Prague beer hall, where there was a lively party of a couple of dozen at the next long table: a professor from the University being given a celebration by his students. They were mining engineers, and sang a great many mining and mountain songs. For such occasions two students stand, one at each end of the table, as double masters of ceremony, keeping up a rapid fire of jokes and personalities. The jokes were fairly usual, to judge from Petr's translations: about a professor who fell

* These reflections on Czechoslovakia, like the rest of this journal, remain as I wrote them, passages of personal history. I have added only two or three notes, dated, like this one, late in March 1948.

down a well, about a student who passed his examination in spite of being drunk, about another who passed his only by paying court to the professor's ugly daughter. Gradually the men at the neighboring tables became involved in the cross-fire of talk, were asked to join the group, and were properly toasted in Pilsener. A visiting professor could hardly have had a better introduction.

The next morning, at eleven, I had my official introduction, and that was very pleasant too. It took place in the office of Dr. Jan Kozak, the Dean of the Philosophical Faculty. I met the members of the English Department, and we sat around a table and talked, over a bottle of good Slovakian red wine. Dr. Kozak, who is a philosopher, has a face both sensitive and shrewd, but he looked very tired, as did the others. Even more than scholars elsewhere in this post-war period, they are badly overworked. Charles University was kept shut by the Nazis for six years, and the huge influx of students now finds a smaller faculty than before. Teachers murdered in concentration camps cannot soon be replaced. The Dean brought out the charter of the University, which, founded in 1348 by Emperor Charles IV, is the oldest in Northern Europe. He added, with a twist of his lips, that this charter was of course only a facsimile. The original was carried off by the Germans, and has not yet been traced.

Jan Stern also welcomed me, along with George and Patsy Ritter, who are here for George to make some study of Czech labor law. Jan, on his home ground, is even more effervescent, if possible, than he was at Salzburg. He now has his passport to study in the Soviet Union, but until he leaves he is working as the poetry critic for *Young Front*, the Communist paper for youth, which is edited entirely by a staff in its early twenties. He invited me to his house, where he introduced me to his mother. His father, a prominent Jewish Social Democrat, was executed by the Nazis, at the same camp where Jan had been sent. His one sister is married to a trade-union organizer. His mother, who is not Jewish, is a quiet and self-effacing, but keenly intelligent woman, who has helped support her family by translations of Henry De Man and other writers of socialist theory.

Jan took me up to his room, where the chief decoration was a modernist abstraction by one of his friends. On the desk there

were some manuscripts, translations that Jan had been making of Mayakovsky. He wanted to read some poems by his favorite living Czech poet, Vladimír Holan, who uses something of the delicate technique of Rilke, but has filled it with a more direct social content. Jan stood in the middle of the floor, gesturing as he translated, and looking even larger than usual as the desk lamp silhouetted his form against the wall. The window was wide open to the cold October evening, as Jan went on with rising eloquence from one poem to the next. We might have stayed there for hours, if his mother had not come up to tell us that tea was ready.

¶ It is interesting to listen to Jan and Petr discuss Czech politics, since, the one a Communist and the other an equally convinced Social Democrat, they seem to differ hardly at all in objectives. Both accept the Czech Revolution of 1945 as the central point in their lives, and feel bound to do everything they can to realize its aims. There does not seem to be the same hostility between the two parties of the left here as in countries less advanced in their drive towards socialism. Even the National Socialists, the party of the center, are Socialists, despite their dubious name, and have supported the nationalization of what by now is approximately 70 per cent of all the industry. The fourth, the People's Party, is Catholic, as, for that matter, are almost three-quarters of the twelve million people of Czechoslovakia. This party is not committed to socialism, but since it is based on the farmers newly released from the big German landowners it is hardly reactionary. In Slovakia, to be sure, where some of the Catholics who formed the support for Father Tiso's native Fascism are still unresolved in their conflicts, the situation is not so clear-cut.

But in Bohemia and Moravia, in the elections of May 1946, the Communists polled 40 per cent, the National Socialists 24, the People's Party 20, and the Social Democrats 16 per cent. What distinguishes the first group from the last is no fundamental divergence in aims, but, just as between Jan and Petr, a difference in temperament, a different emphasis on means. Petr is outspoken in his respect for the Communists' achievements, and knows that without them the Czech Revolution would not have been won. But he is critical of their party organization, of their tendency to lose

the rights of the individual in their too exclusive concern with the mass.

Four or five years older than Jan, Petr is more cautious in his judgment. He was just finishing high school when the Nazis moved into Czechoslovakia in 1938, and was able to continue his studies until the universities were closed a year later. Then he went to a job in a bank. From the desk where he worked he could hear the shooting when the two young Czech paratroopers who had killed Heydrich were finally cornered in a church—after six thousand other Czechs had been murdered in reprisal. Shortly after that Petr himself had been sent as a forced laborer to Germany. Assigned as a clerical worker in a radio factory in Erfurt, his position gradually took on more responsibilities and involved travels of inspection, in which he found that he could be of use to the underground.

He described for me a little of the underground's organization. To insure the greatest possible safety, you knew the names, in your chain of communication, only of the men immediately behind and ahead, so that if you were caught and forced by torture to talk, you could not involve more than two others. Petr was active for a couple of years before he was caught. A letter, which he left at the house of the boy immediately ahead of him in the line, miscarried because the boy had already been arrested. When they got Petr, they did things to him that left a scar on his temple and permanently weakened his eyes. But they got no further in the chain. He spent the last eight months of the war in Buchenwald, lost weight from a hundred and forty pounds to ninety, and reached Prague again the month after the Revolution.

He then settled down to finishing his work in economics at the university, with a job in a government bureau on the side, and had received his degree just before he left for Salzburg. He is now in between jobs, and the kind of decision he wants to make for his future points up his reasons for being a Social Democrat rather than a Communist. He could get a job at once as an organizer for his party, and he obviously possesses outstanding executive gifts. But he does not want his career to depend upon the party in the way that he feels the Communists are far too prone to do, to the ultimate detriment both of the men and the party. Instead he wants

to make his career as an economist, and is hoping for a full-time appointment now in one of the bureaus. On the subject of the corruption that will overtake any party if it does not subject itself to constant self-criticism, he also expressed the kind of central conviction—that is shared, to be sure, by Jan—that the Czech Revolution, in releasing potentialities for the mass of the people, will also create a fuller freedom for more individuals.

(¶ When I stepped out of my hotel to meet the Ritters with their car, they were talking with the owners of a car from Illinois. They had seen the Ritters' Connecticut license plates, and had stopped and come over. They were eager to say hello to anyone from the States. Both the man and his wife had been born in Czechoslovakia, but they had met and married in Chicago, and hadn't been back here since the early nineteen-twenties. They both looked as though they might have come from peasant families, the woman awkward and plain beneath her expensive American clothes, the man very rugged despite the diamonds on his fingers.

Now they had returned, intending to stay a year, but were leaving at the end of three months. They didn't like it at all here any more, things were so upset, the woman was saying. When Patsy asked her what the matter was, she answered that the lower-class people had taken over. Wasn't that what made a healthy country, I asked, and wasn't America also built on a revolutionary tradition?

The man saw trouble coming, and didn't want an argument. He was perfectly frank in saying that he had worked hard for his money, that he had been a sales manager, but was over sixty now and meant to enjoy his money. He didn't enjoy spending it here, why, this hotel was no better than a dump, and you couldn't tell what wouldn't happen in the political situation ahead. He was going back to spend the winter in Florida. He gave George and me each a package of Gillette razor blades that he had in his pocket.

(¶ Petr, without ever explicitly saying so, has quietly constituted himself my guide. The first few mornings in particular he would turn up shortly after breakfast at this hotel

that he found for me in a side street not far from the Old Town Square, and want to know what I would like to do that day. He soon took me to the big student hostel, which he helped convert back from a battered, lice-ridden German barracks and then helped manage during his own student days. This is Unity Hostel, but two of the others, to emphasize the international spirit of the student body, are named Tito and Roosevelt. The furnishing is the barest, and often four students are crowded into a single room. But the food is good, and is priced low enough to enable a student to live on the fifteen hundred crowns (thirty dollars) a month that he is granted by the government if his family has no means to support him. The hostel is run entirely by the students themselves, including the ordering of the food and fuel and the management of the kitchen, and they are obviously proud of it. But many of them also seem tired because of the fierce pressures upon them to make up for the more than six years' lost time between Munich and their liberation. Petr is bothered because too many of them are too serious, and seldom take time enough off to laugh.

My first Saturday night he invited me out to his canoe club, a few miles along the Vltava from the city, to witness the final ceremony of the year: saying good-bye to the boats for the winter. It seemed wise for each of us to take a bottle of wine for the libation.

The party was well launched when we arrived, on the upper floor of the boathouse, in a room lined with pennants and photographs of the river. On such an occasion I had to be introduced in a speech by Petr, and welcomed in a speech by the president of the club. Then they sang 'John Brown's Body,' which may have been the only American song they knew, but no other could have been more heart-warming. While we drank and listened to their other songs between dances, Petr told me about some of the members. The president was a carpenter, the vice-president a young doctor of law. A very quiet member in a corner was one of the nation's heroes, who had blown up six different bridges in the teeth of the strictest German surveillance.

Petr was eager for us to try his boat, so about midnight they bundled me up in four jerseys and a pair of pants much too big for me, and we paddled a mile or so towards the city, the distant towers standing out sharply in the full moonlight. By the time we

got back the party had advanced to dramatic skits, with a gruff-voiced little man acting Svengali and a very tall ungainly one dressed up as Esmeralda, but having so much difficulty in preventing her improvised breasts from sliding down to her belt that most of her hypnotized answers were drowned in laughter. All of a sudden the president was addressing me again, in an even more formal speech, and then presented me with a certificate of membership headed *Varjagove Nezapominaji* ('Varjags Do Not Forget'). He also gave me the little red, green, and blue pennant of the Varjags Club, which I promised that I would put on my own canoe in Maine.

We relaxed again and had some soup, with meat balls in it. Then it turned out, as everyone in a Catholic country would know, though I hadn't, that October 4 was St. Francis day, my name day. So four of them grabbed my shoulders and feet, tossed me in the air, and bounced me, gently, on the floor. After this all the men shook hands with me, I was kissed by the girls, and felt that I was really *in*.

Towards three Petr escorted me to a tram car, and the rest of the party came out on the roof for a final salvo of 'John Brown's Body.' When I assured Petr that I could find my way back to my hotel, he was obviously pleased and left me, though not without instructions to the conductor where to put me off. He then returned to the boathouse for the final ceremony, which would not take place until dawn, when every member would see that his canoe was well stacked for the winter, and would pour a little wine, if any was left, on its bow.

[The walk from the hotel to the University is entirely through the old city. It begins near the Powder Tower, the one remaining gate of the medieval town, then twists through narrow streets past St. James' Church, whose elegant baroque façade is superimposed upon a much older structure. Then it ducks through an alley into the court of the oldest market, the roofs of which are crowned with the red-brown tiles that characterize so much of Prague. The spacious upper balcony running around three sides of this court makes it look quite like the inn yards where the old English plays were performed. It is given its accent at the

farther end by an arch with the hatched and roughened columns which the Renaissance here liked particularly, and leads out to the Parish Church of our Lady of Tyn, mostly in late Gothic. Skirting its buttresses, you come out into the breathtakingly broad Old Town Square, with the huge memorial to Hus in the center.

In front of the Town Hall, the most famous medieval building in Prague, the execution of the Czech patriots took place after the disastrous battle of the White Mountain, in 1621. This spelled the defeat of the Protestants by the Catholics, and the beginning of the long domination of the Germans over the Czechs. The Town Hall itself is now only a broken shell. It was the scene of the worst fighting in the Revolution of May 1945. The Germans brought their tanks into the streets and the Czech patriots inside the building had only whatever arms they had been able to seize from the occupying army. Several of the other buildings around the Square are badly scarred by gun fire, and are marked by many of the small votive tablets which give the name and age of a Czech who died on that spot, sometimes with his already fading photograph in a tin frame, sometimes also with a fresh bunch of flowers. On the farther side is the temporary memorial to the unknown dead. This is simply a taper within red glass, and, inscribed on wood, the dates 1914-1918 and 1938-1945. The first signifies here the time when Czech freedom was regained from the Germans after three hundred years, the second the cruel time when, after only two decades, it had to be won all over again.

In this Square the grandstand was already going up for the celebration of the national holiday of October 28, the day in 1918 when the Czechoslovakian Republic was founded, only ten days after Thomas Masaryk had drafted his Declaration of Independence in Washington. At the far corner you come out into a broad street with an unimpeded view to the river. There on the opposite side is the hill, with the Gothic cathedral on its crest and the long horizontal lines of the seventeenth-century Castle cutting across it, emphasizing in the most spectacular manner, for the whole city to see, the mixture of medieval and baroque which gives Prague its particular quality. With this view to hold my eyes for the last three blocks, I walk over the patterned sidewalk of small rough black

and white stones to the now modern buildings of Charles University on Smetana Square.

Prague, like Paris, and unlike so many other European capitals, was still spared most of its beauty by the war, except for the spots where the street fighting in the week of the Revolution was heaviest. And there is an ugly gash in one of the residential sections where, not long before V-Day, an American squadron lost its bearings and, apparently thinking that it was over Dresden, killed several hundred people in five minutes' bombing. The outlying industrial plants were also heavily hit. Czechs don't like to talk about this to an American, since we made these raids during the last weeks of the war, too late for them to do much harm to the Nazis. But they have made it much harder for the Czechs to regain their industrial potential.

Paris comes most to mind in this other city lying on both sides of a river and spanned by so many bridges. But the light emanating from the fronts of the buildings is not the lustrous silver gray of Paris, but something blonder and softer. It reveals how both the Renaissance and the Baroque washed up here in their full tide from the Italian south.

One of my colleagues is Zdenek Vancura—who was appointed last year to the first professorship of American literature to be established in Central Europe, and the third, after the Sorbonne and Upsala, in the Eastern Hemisphere. He remarked, while we were making an architectural tour of the city, that Prague, in its prevailing quietness, was like the old parts of Boston. Boston could hardly be more flattered. At the time the Pilgrim fathers were still planning their Plymouth Plantation, the Czechs, already centuries old in national experience, had just thrown the imperial ambassadors out of a window of the Castle—giving the jargon-word 'defenestration' a place in every history text-book—and Prague's beauty was already established in its main outlines. And Boston, attractive as it is from the period of its eighteenth-century houses down through Bulfinch and the Greek revival, has nothing to rival Prague's magnificent series of banks and office buildings and apartments in the international style of the late nineteen-twenties and 'thirties, which bear such impressive witness to the vital architectural planning of the early Czech Republic. Wheelwright's Subway

Bridge is a distinguished piece of functional engineering, but it is the only Boston bridge that could be put in competition with half a dozen of the bridges of Prague; and cultured Boston does not yet name many of its bridges and squares after artists and musicians and historians. I wouldn't want to swap my apartment looking out on the warm brick housefronts of Louisburg Square for an apartment in any other small square anywhere; and yet, when you look from Beacon Hill across the Basin, though you may no longer see the mud flats that so depressed Henry James, there is only a jumble of warehouses and factory chimneys, and the white buildings of M.I.T. supported by no other effort at architectural planning.

([From my study window—to borrow a phrase from James Russell Lowell—I look directly down into Smetana Square. The first thing that caught my eye was the immense red star, in geraniums, that serves temporarily to mark the graves of the Russian soldiers who were killed in Prague during the Czech liberation. The gardeners spaded up the soil for the winter, a few days after my arrival, but the star will bloom again in tulips in the spring.]

One of my chief memories of Prague, from a brief visit here in 1931, was the night view of Woodrow Wilson Square outside the main railroad station, with the white statue of the president gleaming under a brilliant flood light. That statue was torn down by the Nazis. On its site there is now a rock-garden representation of an American flag and a Czech flag, and a temporary tablet in gold letters in both Czech and English, headed by Wilson's most famous sentence: 'Svet musi byti zabezpecem pro democracii.' What follows in English may not be perfectly spelled, but its meaning and its feeling are clear: 'From 1928 there stood on this place a monument in honour of Woodrow Wilson President of U.S.A. This monument was destroyed by the Germans in 1941 and will be re-erected by Americans of Czech decent in U.S.A.'

([The library of American literature belonging to the English department here shows a fascinating variety of layers and accretions, as any library must which has grown up largely by accident. Only since 1945, with the United States now in-

escapably involved in Europe as it was not after the last war, has Czechoslovakian education started to become systematically concerned with our culture. But now, ironically, dollars to buy books have become more and more unobtainable. Heretofore the few standard editions were overlaid in greater numbers with whatever became available in Tauchnitz, and with what various American ladies seem to have left behind them in their sentimental journeys. Then there were the best-sellers and/or *Kitsch* of the nineteen-twenties and 'thirties, and whatever publishers' promotion schemes could put across, particularly Albatross editions: Hamburg-Paris-Bologna. At that point the Nazis moved in and the University was shut. Just this summer, following an appeal in the States by Maurice Hindus, two thousand additional volumes have come, and are now in the process of being catalogued.

Before this new accession the library had plenty of Louisa May Alcott and of Gertrude Atherton, but of Sherwood Anderson only *A Story Teller's Story*. Louis Bromfield, who must be one of the best publicized writers in Europe, is here with six titles, and Pearl Buck with eleven. Willa Cather appears only with *Lucy Gayheart*, but this collection does not include translations. *My Antonia* in particular is very popular in its Czech version, for its picture of Czech settlers in Nebraska.

There is more than enough of Frances Hodgson Burnett and F. Marion Crawford, but of Stephen Crane only *Bowery Tales*, and of Hart Crane nothing. Indeed, as might be expected, modern poetry as a whole is fairly sparse. Among the writers of the 'twenties there are Floyd Dell and Carl Van Vechten, Joseph Hergesheimer and Booth Tarkington and Edna Ferber. Hemingway and Dos Passos are pretty well represented, but of Farrell there is only one book of short stories, and of Faulkner so far only *The Unvanquished*. The two contemporary writers nearly all of whose works are here are O'Neill and Sinclair Lewis. O'Neill's popularity seems also to be continuing on the stage, and a production of *Desire Under the Elms* is already announced for this season. Of Upton Sinclair there are *The Jungle*, *The Brass Check*, *King Coal*, *Boston*, and *Little Steel*, and even more of Jack London. A Jack London Club still continues in Prague among the young socialists.

Of our major nineteenth-century authors Emerson and Poe are

most extensively represented, each in a couple of more or less complete editions. There are several copies of *Leaves of Grass*, and a good deal of Mark Twain, though not *Life on the Mississippi*. Of Melville there are reprints from the nineteen-thirties of *Moby Dick*, *Redburn*, and *Piazza Tales*. *Moby Dick* was also widely read in a translation made at that time. Howells appears in sixteen of his quiet novels and sketches—mostly Tauchnitz editions of the eighteen-nineties—but not in his most ambitious social study, *A Hazard of New Fortunes*. Of Henry James, who was reprinted less by Tauchnitz, there are only *Roderick Hudson* and *The Outcry*, which is now virtually unobtainable anywhere.

Several oddities crop up, such as six novels from the eighteen-seventies and 'eighties by John Habberton, the then popular author of *Helen's Babies*. It is not surprising to find a wandering cosmopolite like Lafcadio Hearn, but half a dozen of William Gilmore Simms' historical novels of the older South were hardly to have been expected. I am at a loss to explain the presence of the three novels by Theodore Winthrop of New Haven, which were all published posthumously, after Winthrop was killed in the Civil War.

The books given in response to Hindus' plea help fill many gaps. For instance, Sherwood Anderson will now be almost complete, from the time of his earliest work. But any such donation also depends on what people have dug out of their attics. There is much Washington Irving and Cooper and Longfellow, as well as nineteen volumes by Oliver Wendell Holmes, all of whose *Autocrat* series were here already. There are also nine copies of Van Wyck Brooks' *New England: Indian Summer*.

([For the week-end before my opening lecture Petr made arrangements for us to visit the rest home of the Syndicate of Writers and Artists, thirty miles out in the country at Dobris (pronounced Dobrzish, which is quite beyond my tongue). It doesn't look much like Yaddo or the MacDowell Colony. It is established in what used to be the castle of the Collerado Mannsfeldts, one of the noble Austrian families who moved in, to complete the subjugation of the Czechs, in the seventeenth century. They built here, using serf labor, an enormous baroque mansion in

strawberry-pink stucco. It is not heavy like Schloss Leopoldskron, but airy, spacious, and commanding. The grounds are large enough for an hour's walk. During the occupation, this estate was the headquarters of Heydrich's successor as the Nazi Protector, and it was turned over to the writers only after the Revolution. Here an artist can come and live at a very low fee, while doing his work. Full membership is limited to those who have published three books, or the equivalent in the other arts, or—since this country's cultural life is so bound up with that of other countries—six translations.

The first evening I met several of the large group who had come out for the final session of a meeting to arrange the details of the cultural treaty between Czechoslovakia and France. This is the kind of procedure that many European countries are now using to encourage the circulation of their books and ideas, and to ensure the greatest possible number of exchange scholarships for students and professors. Everyone consumed an appropriate amount of cognac, as Czech and French amity were pledged anew.

The next day there was a lunch for Rex Warner, who had been invited here on a tour by the Ministry of Information. I sat at the left of the chairman, a man of fifty, whom I had not previously met. The name on the card at his plate was Vladimír Procházka. Then began the fascinating game of starting from scratch to try to place him. He opened by apologizing for his English, which he spoke far better than I can handle any foreign speech. He said that he had no difficulty in reading it, since he had done a good deal of translating, including *The Grapes of Wrath*. But the slang there had given him considerable trouble, and he had turned often for help to Mencken's book on the American language. He had finally decided that the nearest equivalent to the Okies' talk would be South Moravian. The Germans had not objected to *The Grapes of Wrath*, since it criticized America, but after 1941 they had shut down on all translations from English or American, and Procházka had had to support himself by translating German.

I had just about placed him as one of the prolific translators of the Syndicate, a fairly safe character probably, since he had been left unmolested during the occupation. I asked him if he was doing any translating now. He said he didn't have time, what with being

a member of Parliament. 'What party?' 'Communist.' But how had he managed to survive in Prague during the war? With a slow grin he said that, luckily, he had a brother in the army, who had escaped to Russia and become a general. The Germans got mixed up and believed there was only one of them, since his Czech friends had thoughtfully crossed his name off the city directory. He went underground, and made his living translating under a new name.

He had been a lawyer by profession, but had been a member of the Communist Party since its first founding in Czechoslovakia in the early nineteen-twenties. He had fought all four years through the other war on the Polish front. What he had observed at first hand of the Russian Revolution had committed him to its aims, once for all.

We were sitting facing portraits of Masaryk and Benes, and, after a toast, I tried to say why I had wanted particularly to come to Czechoslovakia, why his country seemed to me a test-case for my future as well as for his. Americans ought not to forget—no matter what Neville Chamberlain may have said about 'that distant and little-known country'—that the founding of the Czechoslovakian Republic was closely related to our political theory, from Jefferson to Wilson, and that its Declaration of Independence was read publicly for the first time in our Independence Hall. Since my country was also a country of revolution, I wanted to observe how his country was carrying forward its political revolution into the economic sphere, supplementing the revolution of Wilson and Masaryk with that of Marx and Lenin. The test was whether it could fuse and preserve elements of both, whether, habituated through its whole long history to looking both East and West, it could still manage to do so in our threatened times. And this would be a test for America too. The most vital creations in American culture had depended on open assimilation of ideas from all sources. Jefferson drew upon the thought of both England and France, and Emerson found some of his inspiration in German philosophy and Oriental scriptures. If America now pretended that foreign ideas were bad, if we tried to shut them off and to freeze the West into the conservative *status quo* of so-called free enterprise, our responsibility for the future would be grave. We would have done much to compel a country like Czechoslovakia to turn entirely toward

the East. And we would have isolated ourselves hopelessly from the progressive peoples' movements of the present, behind a heavy gold curtain of our own making.

Vladimir Prochazka politely corrected some of my facts. It was not accurate, for instance, to refer, as I had in passing, to Czechoslovakia as a socialist state. It was not yet socialist, though moving in that direction. It could best be described as a people's democracy. Its few wealthy property owners had been mostly Germans, and these had now been expelled. Its people had taken over the control of the land's resources, and were faced once again with the problem of building their own society. But the dominating characteristic of this people—and here he tapped my arm—was its ineradicable devotion to freedom, against whatever oppressors.

By now the lunch had moved on from the excellent dark beer they served with the soup, through the white and red Slovakian wines with the main courses, to coffee and cigars. Our talk also moved on from politics to other topics. Prochazka was, in addition, a professor of law in Charles University, and he asked me some questions about the plan for my lectures. From there we coasted back again to the problem of language and of translation, which still fascinates him. He pointed out a man farther down the table who is working on what will be the fourth complete version of Shakespeare in Czech. Two of the others date back to the nineteenth century, and one to the early twentieth. But even in the short time since then, especially since its release from the official German in 1918, the Czech language has blossomed and developed as it has become the real cultural medium of its people. And so a fourth translation is needed.

As the party broke up, the chairman shook his head once more over the difficulties he had in speaking English, how he did not know enough to convey any of the nuances of his thought. It struck me that he had conveyed plenty.

([An inaugural lecture at Charles University is quite a ceremony. All the professors of English gathered in the office of Dean Kozak, who put his traditional gold chain around his neck and led us in procession to the lecture hall. In his speech of introduction the Dean stated what I hadn't realized before, that

pitched idealism and our peculiarly crass materialism. These conflicts from our past and present prove in their abundant energy that the phrase 'the gold curtain' gives as misleading a view of our life as Churchill's reckless phrase, picked up from the Nazis, gives about life in Prague.

The official lunch afterwards at the National Club was somewhat different from what it would have been at the Harvard Faculty Club. One advantage of a people's democracy in Europe is that it can take over for its purposes any number of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century palaces, each of them bigger than any ten Colonial houses in Boston. There were about a dozen of us at the table in a sunlit room overlooking the court, some history professors, the professors of literature, and Dr. Havranek from the Ministry of Education. The talk was not unlike what it would have been at home—questions about American colleagues and work being done in various fields—but the easy flow was certainly helped by the sequence I have already developed a fondness for: beer with the soup, followed by wines and brandy.

Dr. Havranek, who is one of the Czech delegates to Unesco, was very interested to hear about the Salzburg Seminar. He suggested the possibility of Charles University sponsoring next summer a comparable Seminar in Slavic Studies, to which scholars and students would be invited from the Soviet Union, as well as from America and from the other European countries. The group took up this suggestion eagerly and discussed candidly the current difficulties in getting the Soviet Union to co-operate on any international project. There seemed to be no hesitation nor reserve in their criticism. And yet, while Dr. Havranek is a Social Democrat, his brother, the head of the Slavic department in the University, is a Communist about to leave for a course of lectures in Moscow.

What distinguished this group from a comparable one in America was not merely that these men could all speak four or five foreign languages fluently, as scholars must in a small country, where even the Prague policemen are expected to speak at least one language besides Czech. Nearly all of these men had been in exile or in concentration camps. Professor Otakar Voadlo, their leading interpreter of English cultural life and the author of a book on American literature in the nineteen-twenties, had been sentenced for such

work to Buchenwald. You could still sense his three years there in the slightness of his frame, in spite of the animation and gaiety of his conversation. One way he had kept his spirit alive was by reading over and over some poems of Keats. He had pieced these together from the torn sheets of a book that the Nazis had sent to the camp as toilet paper.

Dean Kozak and his wife had escaped to America, where he had taught at Oberlin and had done a great deal of broadcasting for the OWI's program for Central Europe. But his brother had been caught by the Nazis, and his children had had to go underground. The Dean's youngest son had managed to get to England, where he had fought with the R.A.F. He was killed one week before V-Day. The nephew who played Moby Dick in the lake had contracted typhus at a concentration camp, and had been thrown out with a heap of corpses. A passing guard saw that he was still alive, and rescued him. After that he survived still another camp from which less than a quarter of the inmates came out alive. At the end of the war he started his study of medicine, but now he had temporarily broken down—and his uncle stressed the word temporarily—with tuberculosis.

(I had looked forward to the topical revue of Voscovec and Werick, the comedians whose anti-Fascist satires were one of the great sensations of the 'thirties. They had been in America during the war, and, in Margaret Webster's production of *The Tempest*, were uproarious as Stephano and Trinculo. They had rescued those roles from the worn-out winks and gags of the nineteenth century, and restored to them the elaborately stylized business of Elizabethan and *commedia dell' arte* clowns.

They came home after the liberation, and their shows, which they write and direct themselves, are still widely popular. But they are finding it harder now to discover and maintain their new stance. Satire is their mode, and satire is not now the prevailing mood in Prague. But in their current production, an uninhibitedly free parody of *Julius Caesar*, they contrive to pack in a good deal of satire, particularly in the scene when the ghost of Caesar reappears to tell the people—in the words of the detailed English synopsis that is furnished to those who need it—'that though Caesar was,

indeed, killed in the Senate, he won't be dead as long as he lives in their minds and souls,—he'll not be dead unless they succeed in killing him in their own hearts and heads. If his slogans and the cracking of his whip are still in them, he might as well be alive.'

Another scene from recent history brought roars of delight. A political opportunist, making an alarmed but clumsy attempt to prevent his maid from displaying the Czech flag in May 1945, only succeeded in letting it hang over his balcony, and was promptly proclaimed a revolutionary patriot by the enthusiastic crowd in the street below.

We went backstage after the show. Voscovec and Werick brought out a bottle of *slivovice*—the plum brandy that is a cousin to vodka—and plunged almost at once into politics. They are very sensitive to their audiences, and they feel everywhere today a great insecurity, always the latent question, 'Who knows where we'll be two years from now?'

They are also acutely aware of their own problem. They were in the forefront of the fight against the Nazis, stinging in their satire of the early betrayal of Loyalist Spain. But when they came back from America, they refused to join any political party. As Voscovec talked, he used the word liberal in the looser American sense. He feels the pressures now from both the East and the West. He doesn't like either, though he believes that the Americans' cynical by-passing of the United Nations, in the plan of military aid for Greece and Turkey, bears the major responsibility for the Soviets' new counter-militance.

What bothers both him and Werick most now in Czechoslovakia is the residue of some of the attitudes of mind bred by the long occupation by the Nazis. That was what they were striking at, in their presentation of Caesar's ghost. Werick cited an instance involving a friend who had had a car sent him from America, and who was visited, unexpectedly, at his apartment by some government agents who wanted to find out how he had paid for it. The agents had no business to enter in that unannounced and intimidating way, and would not have done so without the Fascist pattern behind them. The man in turn became rattled, and when one of the agents noticed his expensive American cigarette case and asked him if he had a certificate of purchase for it, he said, no, he hadn't,

and foolishly handed it over, though there is nothing in Czech law demanding such a certificate. Werick was disturbed even more by his friend's behavior than by that of the agent, since it betrayed a lack of resolution in affirming his own rights, a fear which had been engendered by the Nazis.

Voscovec insisted on the need of a third way, neither that of Russia nor America. I wondered what the chances would be for such a middle course. Just that morning Dr. Hromadka of the Jan Hus Theological Faculty had presented an honorary degree to Hewlett Johnson, the Dean of Canterbury. The Czechs possess a fine sense for ceremonies. This one was accompanied, at entrances and exits, as well as in its salutations and significant pauses, by sennets on the trumpet and trombone. The Dean is a very tall and imposing old man, and his speech of response phrased the theory of mediation upon which we must learn to act. He cited the great heritage of Western freedoms, of speech and worship, of assembly and demonstration and press, freedoms which, since the time of Jan Hus, Czechs have had their share in making, freedoms which need continual re-making, and not one of which we can afford to lose. The Dean then quoted Whitehead's view that, priceless as these freedoms are, they are only the final flower of civilization. Before they all can be attained by the mass of the people, other freedoms are necessary. These are the freedoms that have been insisted upon by the Revolution in the East: freedom to work—if you need a job—freedom from want, freedom to be housed and clothed and to receive medical care, the essential economic freedoms. The Dean's main point was that there is nothing inherently contradictory between these two sets of freedoms, that they must now complement each other if a Christian or any humane society is to endure.

The light was strong on his face as he spoke. He was stating a faith, many violations of which can be cynically demonstrated by partisans of East or West. But it is a faith which I share. There is only one third way that a just man should accept between present-day Russia and present-day America, between—to give them their worst names—the dictator's corruptions of the communist ideal and the capitalists' corruptions of the democratic ideal. It would be not a compromise, but a more complete socialism which would do justice both to the individual and to society.

(¶ My seminar will be on the age of Whitman and Melville. After the first session, Jaroslav Schejbal and Ludmila Fiserova, the two members of this group of thirty who had been at Salzburg, came up to suggest a Sunday afternoon walk through parts of Prague I had not yet seen. I get the impression from them and from nearly all the other students I have met that they all work far too hard. The majority even of the undergraduates are in their mid-twenties, and feel pressed to make up for all those years lost in the occupation. They try to do it by crowding far too many courses into a single term. Jarka and Leda are studying both English and Russian, and have schedules of lectures running more than thirty hours a week. Both of them have to contribute to their families' income, and teach English or Russian to beginners another ten hours a week. And still all their reading has to be done.

But they are full of plans of things for us to do together. That first Sunday walk we started south along the Vltava. Our goal was the lovely high hill above the river, upon the summit of which many of the artists and writers are buried. We leaned against a parapet, looking across to the Castle and the Cathedral on the other side of the Vltava, and ate some apples that Leda had brought back from a visit to her family in the country. Jarka pointed out the clubhouse of his Sokol, where for six hours a week he is helping to drill his group in preparation for the great festival of 1948. From what Jarka and others have said, I have begun to understand what a significant index the Sokol is to the Czech national character. An American, looking at pictures of a whole field full of people in the disciplined drill of calisthenics, might conclude that here was something indistinguishable from a Nazi throng. But the movement is rooted in something very different. The Sokol (which means Falcon) was founded by a group of patriots back in the eighteenth-century, long before political independence was possible, in order to help give to Czechs of all ages a sense of belonging together. Deeper than pride in the precision and grace of gymnastic exercises lie the society's ideals of equality and fraternity. The Nazis were quick to recognize that the Falcon is also a living symbol of the Czechs' fierce love of liberty. They put to death as many of the society's leaders as they could.

Jarka has been a member since he was five, and remembers when

his mother first brought him to this clubhouse. On our way down from the hill we stopped at another historic site: the park bench where Jarka and Leda had spent long afternoons last spring studying for their examination in Logic.

Jarka then took us to have some tea at his family's apartment. His father and mother stay most of the time in the country now, since his father's eyes do not permit him to work. The room we sat in was both their bedroom and the family sitting room. There was a picture of the Virgin over the big bed, though Jarka himself is a free thinker. On the sofa was a much-squeezed woolly lion sewed on a cushion, which Jarka admitted with a grin had been his first toy. As we drank our tea made from apples, he showed his greatest treasures now, the twenty books on the shelf over the stove. He has to choose very seriously and carefully, since there is no money to spare, and he haunts the windows of the big bookstore near the National Theater to see what new books have arrived. Books from abroad come in very few copies at most, and you have to be on the spot if you want to get one. He was very proud to have Mencken's *American Language*, which must have taken all the money earned by his lessons for several weeks. He also had Untermeyer's anthology of British and American poetry, and Penguin editions of Defoe and Smollett and Shaw. An omnibus volume of Gorki cost half the price that a similar American book would here, but it was on cheap paper and less well printed.

Both Jarka and Leda are more interested in American than in English or Russian literature. They show no hostility or dread of the Soviet Union, though their main concerns lie outside politics. Jarka is disturbed by the tendency in current Soviet thought represented by Fadeyev's *The Young Guard*, because the conception of the hero in that widely popular novel is unexamined and uncritical, and gives a copy-book picture which Jarka finds unreal. This is the same kind of solid objection he made to *The Moon Is Down*.

He brought out last the one-volume edition of *The Cambridge History of American Literature*. He and Leda recalled their breathless astonishment when they saw the only copy at Topic's, and learned from the clerk that the man who had ordered it had not turned up, that Jarka could have it. There was a poignant disproportion between their excitement and the fairly routine and now

quite dated history they had acquired. I have seldom seen a more touching reverence for books.

Jarka wanted me to take the remaining pieces of sugared cake for a snack while I was working, but I knew that his big, seemingly tireless body would be hungry far sooner than mine. They insisted upon escorting me all the way back to my hotel, and I had already learned that it would be useless to resist such an offer.

(¶ You begin to feel that you belong to a city when some of its sights and sounds are no longer strange. The people of Prague boast that every tenth store is a bookstore, and bookstores do seem almost as plentiful as bars in an old-time Western American town.

The first couple of Sunday evenings that I saw the crowds in Wenceslas Square jammed on the sidewalks in front of one of the newspaper offices, I thought that some major crisis must have broken in the international situation. I then learned that these crowds waited there every Sunday evening for the soccer scores. Soccer is the most popular sport, and the excitement was particularly intense when Czech and Slovak teams managed to take two out of three games from the best team from the Soviet Union.

A smell which is unmistakably Prague is the pungent whiff of sausages spluttering in their fat. When the GIs found that these little hot dogs, which are sold in pairs, were called *horķi parki* (*parki* means pair), they transformed it at once into *porky*, and felt at home. One of the many little stands where these *horķi parki* are cooked fresh while you wait is on the corner of the side street by my hotel. Almost every night my last image of the city is the group of broad-backed taxi drivers outlined against the glow from the charcoal fire, talking and stamping their feet while they eat. The aroma from the frying follows me all the way to the hotel door.

The incessant procession of undersized but overinsistent tram cars makes the one strident noise in this otherwise quiet city. Another, more novel sound that marks the autumn week-ends is the penetrating shriek of geese, as they are brought in from the country in bags, only their indignant heads showing, and are carried from trains to trams with a dark future in store.

A sound that has pounded itself into the day's rhythm is the early morning beating of the rugs in the cavernous courtyard behind the hotel. The windows on the stairs are thrown open to air out the halls on even the coldest mornings, and I can see the rug-beater five floors below in the gray half-light. The rugs hang over a wire, and he stands far enough away to get a full stroke. He seems to swing with all imaginable animation and joy, with all the nonchalance of a four-hundred hitter at the plate, and with all the grace of a cat poised to tear the stuffings out of the back of a wing-chair.

The rest of the day he mooches around the upper halls, up to no apparent good, giving an occasional half-hearted dab at the brass railings of the stairs, or sliding out of sight with a blue tin cup of coffee and a savory hunk of onion. He is thin and round-shouldered, with a friendly but watery eye, an almost invisible cigar-butt between his toothless gums, and no trace of his heroic air of the morning. What makes him enjoy beating those rugs so much, whether it is his private compensation for all the years of the Nazis, or whether his wife beats him, I'll never know. But for half an hour a day, he is a toreador, a D'Artagnan, a champion.

(Jan Stern will not go to study in Moscow this year. The decision was hard for him to make, but he has been offered a major editorial job on *Tvorba* (*Creation*), the Communist cultural weekly, and he felt that he could not turn it down. The main consideration affecting himself and his friends in the party here is the serious, sometimes almost total lack of trained people in Czechoslovakia to take up the new responsibilities of intellectual leadership. The deep gash in Czech cultural life made by the Germans cannot be quickly healed, especially on the left, where many of the best were killed first. Jan is determined to postpone his education only for a year, since he wants to finish his work for his doctor's degree in philosophy. But he will have a hard time ever to break away.

When he dropped into my hotel with this news, he also asked for some suggestions about American texts that should be translated into Czech. I told him that—unless it was translated already—*In Dubious Battle* was in many ways Steinbeck's best book, and

that it gave a picture of labor's struggles in the depression. He wrote it down, but added that the books didn't have to be about social problems, that he wanted most to know about some of our good works of art. I told him my feeling that Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* is the best work of fiction we have produced since the First World War, that it has the simple authenticity which makes it a classic in the kind of American prose that is closest to poetry. Its picture of the American country town, just at the beginnings of industrialization, might appeal greatly to Czech readers, so many of whose cousins and friends had gone out to settle in just such Mid-Western towns.

Hemingway is, of course, widely known, but if he wanted other examples of well-written American books, he ought to try *The Great Gatsby* or any of the stories of Katherine Anne Porter. We speculated about the possibility of translating Ring Lardner, but agreed that finding an equivalent for such expert American lingo would probably prove too difficult.

He asked also about new poetry. Sandburg has been much translated, and Eliot and Frost are well known, but Jan wanted a poet who would interest younger Czech readers by having written about the war. It seemed to me that *V-Letter* would be a good choice. Shapiro's effort to reach a more popular style in both his satires and lyrics, and particularly in his long 'Elegy for a Dead Soldier,' should convey, even in translation, the most recent consciousness of what it is to be an American.

Jan had been started on his compilation of this list by questions from some of his young friends, who are running an experimental theater. They had been discussing usable American plays. They had considered producing *Deep Are the Roots*, but the well-established theater of E. F. Burian has just announced a performance. For plays with some social content the early work of Odets still seemed about the best we had, and I loaned Jan *Waiting for Lefty* and *Awake and Sing*. Lillian Hellman is already known. It was impossible to guess how our pre-war social comedies, like those of Philip Barry or S. N. Behrman, would act now on a Prague stage, or how a good play like Sidney Howard's *They Knew What They Wanted*, so localized in Prohibition days in California, would carry across so many miles and customs.

O'Neill is continually performed here, with far more revivals than in America now. And Thornton Wilder's *The Skin of Our Teeth* has been popular, as it has been throughout Central Europe, for a deeper philosophical bearing on the problem of survival after the war than I can find in it. As we ran through the other possibilities, mentioning the success of *The Glass Menagerie* in Paris, it was depressing to recognize how very few even temporarily lasting plays we are producing in the over-priced market of Broadway. But when I named Robert Sherwood's *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, Jan's face lit up with enthusiasm. If it gave a real picture of Lincoln, that's what his young friends wanted.

We went out for a cup of coffee at what the Czechs call an Automat, a little stand-up snack bar. The news of the Paris municipal elections had just hit the headlines, and we were both shocked at De Gaulle's command of 40 per cent of the voters. 'Would that make Americans see the dangers of the new Fascism?' I told Jan my fear that it would have the opposite effect—that without Roosevelt to warn against De Gaulle's consuming egomania, the American press would now rally to support him as a bulwark against Communism.

Jan had been disturbed by much that he had heard lately about the French. One of his student friends had spent the summer in Paris, and had come back with the feeling that even the French of the left had been demoralized by the occupation. There was very little good will or generosity of spirit. Many people were shutting themselves tightly into loyalty only to their immediate families, with suspicion and distrust for all outside. 'Not like some of those good American guys at Salzburg,' Jan added. 'Even some of the very conservative ones had good hearts.'

I hoped that America, which had not known the grinding attrition of occupation, would prove to have an abundance of that unexpendable resource. And I thought how unbelievable this conversation would sound to people who believe what they read now in the American papers. For here was one of the most devoted of the young Communists in a city hardly more than three hundred miles from the Soviet border. And his mind, instead of being fixed in a hostile pattern, was as curious for new experience as any I have ever found at home.

([The question of the American press rises every day you live in a city like Prague. The noon after my talk with Jan, an American lieutenant and I sat down at the same table in a crowded restaurant. There is a steady stream of our soldiers here, mostly on leave from Germany; but I have not yet seen a member of the Russian army.* The lieutenant had gone to college in Nebraska, had been in Europe for almost two years now, with his headquarters at Nuremberg, and had obviously been interested by every minute of his experience. He was frankly astonished by Prague, it was so different from what he had been led to expect. Why, he had been told that there wasn't any freedom of the press, and here he found papers run by each of the four political parties, and papers from all over the world, no matter what they said about Czechoslovakia. And he had been told that the people would be unfriendly to Americans and would try to avoid speaking to you, but instead most people were very friendly and would talk about anything you liked. 'You know,' he said, pointing to a copy of *Time* that he had with him, 'I'm beginning to think that we need a better slant on what we mean by freedom of the press. Too many of our guys seem to think it means you're free to print anything, without any responsibility to be sure that what you print is really true.'

In the Paris *Herald* I bought as I left him, there was a critical account of the broadcast in which Walter Winchell had screamed to millions of hopped-up listeners: 'The Communists have germ warfare already—and they are working hard on the atomic bomb. . . There will be fifty Pearl Harbors. . . The cholera plague in Egypt is suspected abroad of being a Soviet experiment. There are some very suspicious things about that plague in Egypt, although there's no positive evidence either way.' (It was not until several weeks later that I read that the Soviet Union, working through the agency of UN, had actually sent a good deal of serum to relieve the epidemic.)

* I saw only two or three, also on leave, during my whole stay in Czechoslovakia.

¶ One of the salient features of Czech history is the extraordinary degree to which its national consciousness was created by its thinkers. The seminal figure was the historian, Frantisek Palacky, who began to publish his *History of the Czech People* in 1836. He gave his readers, held down by more than two centuries of the Austrian yoke, a sense of their great past and their heroic tradition. His was one answer to Herder's exhortation to all the peoples of Europe to rely upon their own native backgrounds and to revive their own cultural patterns.

Herder, born in East Prussia, had regarded the Slavs as the least corrupted of peoples, and had predicted for them a vigorous future. But the Slavs in the Czech lands had to start at the very roots. The language itself had almost died out of educated usage, and was saved only by a patient succession of nineteenth-century scholars and translators. Impelled by something of the same imaginative vision that stirred Palacky, they set out to prove that their language could be as flexible and full as any other. One of the first great texts by which they proved it was Joseph Jungmann's translation into Czech of *Paradise Lost*.

Palacky thought in terms of cultural independence within the Austrian Empire. It was only in the next generation that Thomas Masaryk, as professor of philosophy at Charles University, carried forward the inescapable implications of Palacky's ideas, and began to think also of political independence. And only when he was in his late sixties did the break-up of the Empire during the First World War finally provide him with the opportunity to take the step from philosopher to President, and to create the modern Czech state. In that achievement his greatest aid came from another intellectual in the next generation, a young professor of history at Charles University, Eduard Benes.

Discussing Emerson with men and women who had grown up against this background, I thought of more new associations. Emerson had felt something of the same *Zeitgeist* when, in the very year of Palacky's first volume, he set out in *Nature* and then in *The American Scholar* to provide our country with a consciousness adequate to its destiny. The order of events was reversed: Emerson and Thoreau could both build upon the fact of political independ-

ence as they insisted upon the need to create a commensurate independence in our culture. As they fought against further borrowing from the polite locutions of the English reviews, and began digging out the real American speech from the soil of our own experience, they may not have been doing anything so revolutionary as the substitution of Czech for German. But they were sharing in what was most vital in every European language at that time. Emerson, with his exquisite sense of fresh discovery, might almost have been paraphrasing Lessing when he said: 'The literature of the poor, the feelings of the child, the philosophy of the street, the meaning of household life, are the topics of the time. It is a great stride. It is a sign—is it not?—of a new vigor when the extremities are made active, when currents of warm life run into the hands and feet. . . What would we really know the meaning of? The meal in the firkin; the milk in the pan; the ballad in the street; the news of the boat; the glance of the eye; the form and gait of the body.'

These famous sentences give a full and clear insight into what Emerson provided for Whitman. Fired by Emerson's glowing conception of the poet, Whitman went ahead to sing a song of himself which would present at the same time a representative American man. In this way he would endow our country, lacking a past in the folklore common to older lands, with its own heroic myth of the future.

Today, with the growing knowledge of cultural anthropology, the nature and function of myth is the most absorbing question in modern literature, and a fine book could be written dealing with its definitions from the time of Lessing and Herder to that of Joyce and Mann and Kafka. When Joyce set out to shape the 'un-created conscience' of his race, he was emulating, as Yeats and the other creators of the Irish renaissance had done very explicitly, the example of Emerson and Whitman in creating the American renaissance.

([In this city of Kafka, whatever direction you go, whenever you turn any wide corner, you find before you or behind you the Castle on its hill. It is no wonder that such an image became so ingrained in him that, transformed by the obsessive force of his imagination, it grew into the dominant image

of a whole novel. It is a further irony in his whole strange career of isolation that he is now almost unread here by the new generation, at the very moment when his command over the allegories of the inner life has given him such a vogue in England and America, has made him an influence upon nearly every younger writer determined to escape from the surfaces of current realism. Because Kafka wrote in German, the new readers here, in their understandable reaction against everything German, have not felt much curiosity about him. Edwin and Willa Muir have done excellent English versions, but Kafka has not yet been translated into Czech. However, translations are now contemplated, and when they appear, the Czechs can hardly fail to respond, especially to *The Trial*, with its terrifying image of Fascist controls, projected before the Nazi movement had even come into being.

¶ Jan has introduced me to several of his friends, among them the political editor of *Young Front*, who is only twenty, and the director of *Disc*, the experimental theater, who is twenty-two. His first production for this season was a free version of Aristophanes' *Peace*. The last performance of it I had seen was that of the Harvard Student Union the spring before Pearl Harbor. The boys who acted in it then knew that they were headed into war. But they were reacting as strongly as possible against the cool view expressed by many of their elders in the University, that war was merely a matter of strategy and tactics, hardly more to be dreaded than the traffic in Harvard Square. They refused to take such a view. They realized that there would be dying to be done, and not by their professors. And even on the verge of war they insisted in affirming the values of peace, when Harvest and Holiday might return.

The performance here at Prague does not spring from any such defiance, but out of a sense of something gained which the young Czech people intend to do their best not to lose. The pace of their acting is very animated, and the scenery and costumes are full of the bright colors which Czechs like so much. The topical allusions are brought up to date—which Aristophanes gives full license for—and the scenes are often punctuated by the realistic sounds of an air-raid siren. At one point a little ball marked AROM is tossed

around nervously from hand to hand until it is safely lodged in the insatiable mouth of Aristophanes' dung-eating Beetle. At the end a German helmet has been converted into a chamberpot, and Harvest and Holiday, in Bohemian peasant costumes, have been heartily embraced. The whole cast then urges the audience to join in their song written for the performance, the chorus of which begins: 'Hej Mir!'—that is to say, 'Hey Peace!'—and begs her to remain and flourish 'with poet, planter, worker, engineer.'

The cast, to whom Jan introduced me after the show, wanted to know all about the Harvard production. They then took us up on the stage to demonstrate, with some elaborate pantomime, where I would not find their iron curtain.

([The opera and the theater are among Prague's traditional sources of pride. The National Theater, built in the eighteen-eighties and displaying, as probably every subsequent opera house in the world does, the influence of Paris, bears an inscription all its own: *Narod sobe* ('The Nation's Gift to Itself'). The completion of this building marked an important moment in the Czech people's struggle for cultural autonomy. It was made possible entirely by popular subscription, without any recourse to the Austrian overlords of wealth. The state now maintains two operas in Prague alone. A friend at the Ministry of Education reminded me with the most pleasant of smiles that this is one more regular company than now survives in the whole United States. Between the two houses there is a repertory during the winter of fifty to sixty different works. There are also two municipal theaters, and all the others receive some government subsidy.]

During my few weeks here I have already had a chance to see Molière's *Amphitryon* and *The School for Husbands*, and Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*. None of these, within my theater-going memory, has ever been given in America. Also playing in repertory are Shaw's *Fanny's First Play*, *The Man of Destiny*, and *Man and Superman*, Wilde's two chief plays, Sartre's *No Exit* and *The Respectful Prostitute*, Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, and Simonov's *The Russian Question*. All of these are in addition, naturally, to a number of plays by Capek and by other Czech writers.

A special Prague theater is that of E. F. Burian which, like that of Voscovec and Werick, dates back to the nineteen-thirties. Burian's emphasis on direction, staging, and lighting reveals aims similar to those of Meyerhold, in contrast to Stanislavsky's emphasis on the actor. Burian survived three years in a concentration camp, and is a strong Communist. His first production for this season was a version of Hans Christian Andersen's *The Emperor's New Clothes*. It was done very lightly and fancifully, with a gay fairy-tale spirit, yet with an up-to-date social implication that we should cast off old trappings and pretence and see man as he is, naked but in his true stature.

The *Troilus* was disappointing, mainly because it was a revival of a production that the same director had done twenty-five years before. Its dated quality was evident in the now rather old-fashioned settings and the too uniformly paced speaking of the lines. Yet it was still abundantly clear how much this play has to say to our immediate moment of time, not only in its mood of disillusionment with war and with broken love, but, overwhelmingly, in its vision—in the great speech of Ulysses—of the terrible precariousness of life itself if world-order is shattered.

The performances I have enjoyed most so far are those of Molière, whose plays I never have had a chance to see at home except when Jimmy Savo or Bobby Clark have torn *The Would-Be Gentleman* to pieces in their own fine ways, or when some Harvard students have proved that his comedies as written are even finer. I am still hoping that Barry Fitzgerald, that greatest actor of comedy, will revive some of them again in the Irish prose translation done by Lady Gregory for the Abbey players.

Going to the theater in a country where you don't know the language is a curious kind of experience. But, as I found out at the Moscow Festival ten years ago, if you know the play well, you can give an undistracted keenness to every detail of acting and presentation, and can learn a great deal about stagecraft that often escapes your scattered attention when you are paying primary heed to what is being said. The acting, to be sure, must be very good to survive such a test. The acting in Prague, in comparison, say, with the Russian performances I saw of *The Cherry Orchard* or *The Inspector General*, is casual and unstylized. But the Czechs seem

to have a particular flair for low-comedy roles, perhaps because their Sganarelle and even their Thersites seem based on the actual comic peasant types who come in from the country for their Sunday holiday.

The Czech feeling for the arts, like that of the Slavs everywhere, is widely diffused. You see it in the beautiful embroidery of their traditional country costumes, and in the design of their world-famous glass and pottery. The people seem to be as proud of their National Museum, which dominates Wenceslas Square, as they are of their National Theater, though to a foreign eye they would appear to have produced in the past very little painting of anything like the first rank. But for the Czechs a nineteenth-century artist like Ales has a great importance. He portrayed themes from their legends, and so contributed, especially in his widely circulated illustrations, to the creation of their national myth.

Fondness, almost reverence, for art is more common than exacting standards of choice. This is particularly apparent in the continual delight which the Czechs take in Smetana and Dvorak. My friend Dr. Kuska at the Ministry of Education used to be the Czech Consul at Cleveland, and was always depressed there by the way most of the men in the suburb where he lived came home from work, ate their supper, read the paper, and went to bed. They didn't even want to go to a beer hall and sing. One of Dr. Kuska's chief functions now is to see that the mass of the people are given every chance to share in the arts. Free evenings for workers are frequent at the theater, and the Ministry of Education has experimented in introducing some short concerts into the noon hour at factories. Good engravings and wood-cuts have been produced and distributed at the cheapest possible figures, and when some plant has done a bang-up job of production, it is awarded, not an E, but a canvas by a contemporary artist.

(I like the informal way in which you meet people in a country which is small enough to give the sense that anyone can know anyone else he wants to. I came in from the theater one night to find that I had been invited to lunch the next day by Mr. Zdenek Fierlinger, the first prime minister after the Revolution, and subsequently chairman of the Social Democratic

Party. He had been ambassador to the Soviet Union for several years before the war, and is a proponent of close co-operation between his party and the Communist Party of Prime Minister Klement Gottwald.

It was October 28, their National Independence Day, and I expected some formal banquet, but was pleased to find just Mr. and Mrs. Fierlinger. He was simple and direct and easy to talk to, and also gave the feeling throughout of having a reserve of careful intelligence. Particularly acute was his remark after our discussion of the present tension in America—the mounting, almost hysterical fear of anything even as little to the left as the New Deal had been. Mr. Fierlinger observed that since Roosevelt's death there had been an increasingly chaotic situation, and then added: 'The people need an idea.'

He knows the American background, and was in Washington during the Coolidge administration. He was amused to recall how little anyone in America knew then about his recently established nation. One hostess was thrown into irrecoverable confusion by his having turned up in company with the Yugoslav minister: one of them at a time was all she could possibly keep straight. We talked about the greater necessity now, in our air-borne age, for all countries to know more about one another. And it occurred to me again, as it has while traveling in America and particularly through our Middle West, that much of our own history needs to be rewritten.

Until now our immigrant groups have been studied too exclusively in terms of the problem presented by their assimilation into the dominant Anglo-Saxon society. The end point of the study has been the moment when the immigrants were so assimilated and became 'good Americans.' This kind of history gave a true enough record of the aspirations of most of the immigrants themselves. But now that we are no longer predominantly an Anglo-Saxon society, now that our chief hope in avoiding a too narrow nationalism lies in the rich variety of our racial composition, our historians have another opportunity.

There is room for the kind of history that will trace in detail what these peoples brought with them to the new world, what cultural values they cherished in their own countries, to what extent

they have contributed some of those values to America—to what extent, therefore, Czechoslovakia or Poland or Ireland or Italy, however modified or transformed, are still a living part of the United States. Such history would center both on foreground and background. By making Americans more aware of the diversified strains from which we have come, it would enable us to know more about the rest of the world, and it could help to provide us with the international understanding we so much need now in fulfilling our unaccustomed but unavoidable role as a world power.

(¶ After lunch I walked back across the Old Town Square, listened to the holiday band concert, and watched the crowd. These solid Slav faces, serious, humorous, tough, and gentle, were not very different from the faces that I used to see as a boy in Illinois. During my first year at Oxford, when I had been very uneasy in the upper-class atmosphere of New College and couldn't bear to hear myself called 'sir' once more in that special tone of the English servant, I visited southern Germany. Living there with a family in Freiburg, I suddenly—to my astonishment—found myself feeling at home for the first time since I had left America. I had had no notion of what has been borne in upon me many times since, that the kind of simple middle-class patterns to which I was accustomed were closer to Central Europe than to anything I have ever found in England. The reasons for such a generalization are hard to seize, since they lie in the tiniest details: the way you call the cat in the morning, the way you sit down at the table, the kind of outspoken warmth between the members of the family, and—this is much more obvious—the kind of food you *don't* eat at any meal: not watery porridge, nor toast with the double affront of being both burnt and cold, not kippers, nor vegetable marrow, nor parsnips, nor drowned cabbage, nor inert brussels sprouts, nor sour gooseberry tart, nor all those other horrors of cooking that render English food, except for the fine mutton and beef, one of the disastrous failures of civilization.

Well, what was there so good to eat in Germany in 1924, when the mark had recently collapsed, and when I made my first acquaintance with horsemeat? I suppose it was the way the horsemeat was served, covered with the kind of brown gravy I was used

to and with mashed or fried potatoes, to prove that you can do something other than boil them. And peas and creamed celery to prove that vegetables don't have to be served under water. And noodle soup of the sort that my grandfather relished.

These things are not really a question of better or worse. (I know that kippers are supposed to be a delicacy.) But, depending upon what you are used to, they are the things that make you feel at home. I would like to read a good history of American cooking, which most travelers suppose to be as standardized as the horrible banquets in our misnamed luxury hotels or as the much better can of beans and coffee you get at the quick lunch cart. You have to travel by car and take your time if you are to find out our regional dishes. Then you can begin to add up a few of them from east to west: Maine lobster and Maryland chicken and Connecticut shad roe and Virginia cornbread, giant frogs' legs from anywhere west of Buffalo, black bass and wall-eyed pike from our prairie lakes, red snapper and pompano in New Orleans, all the astonishing things they can do with chile and corn and white beans in New Mexico, especially if served to garnish a steak from Texas, or—if you want to be fancy—you can think of a deer from the mountains. By then you hardly need to move on to California, but if you do you'll find the best restaurants in the country in San Francisco, and can make the acquaintance, for instance, of cracked crab and abalone steak.

When I got back to the Hotel Paris after lunch with Mr. Fierlinger, the boys at the desk were very excited to know what we had eaten. They did not seem to be satisfied, though I had been greatly so, with cheese omelet, veal and spinach, red wine, layer cake, and coffee. They insisted that since it was a national holiday we should have had either carp, which is also their Christmas dish, or pork with their favorite potato dumplings.

(Most of my political contacts through the University are conservative, and this corresponds to the nature of most professors everywhere. Here it means that they are National Socialists. One striking feature of this country, which Dean Kozak emphasizes, is that there is no reactionary right of the sort that is now paralyzing France. The Republic of 1918 got rid of the Aus-

trian overlords. The Revolution of 1945 completed the process by removing the few big industrialists who had collaborated with the Nazis, and by turning the industries over to the state.

The Dean himself, unlike most American deans, has been active in politics, and a member of Parliament for the National Socialists. He is sure that the overwhelming majority of the people want to build a socialized state, if only the lack of foreign credits resulting from the new American policy towards Eastern Europe does not force an economic stalemate. Except for this contingency he has no fear of Russia. And even on this question his attitude should not be described as fear, since he always shows a fine confidence in his people's ability to preserve their own freedoms. 'After all,' he says, 'there is a bit of Jan Hus in every Czech.'

Some of the National Socialists and more of the People's Party are bitter in their talk about Russia. They show a fear of the unknown, or a fear—on the part of the irresolute—of being interfered with. They declare that there is an iron curtain, which begins at the Russian border, and that Russia is now the great isolationist, to the extent that not even her neighboring countries know what is happening there. But even most of these speakers give an explanation for the Soviet attitude. They know that the Soviet Union was terribly devastated by the war, and that for years ahead she must repair that destruction before her standard of living can be anything like as high as that in Czechoslovakia. They are not surprised that in these circumstances Russia keeps even most of her scholars and intellectuals at home. But they are made uneasy by the absence of channels for communication, and by the resulting ignorance on both sides.

No one I have talked with envisages any act of aggression by Russia against Czechoslovakia, though many are apprehensive of what tactics the local Communist Party might use if it should increase from 40 to 51 per cent of the voters. The only real fear I heard expressed by a responsible Socialist came when we faced the possibility that, as a result of the situation between East and West, the Soviet Union might withdraw from the United Nations. 'I'd go underground,' he said. 'I'd give up intellectual life, and go to work in the mines.'

¶ The thirty students in my discussion group have picked up their English from many sources. Eva Konradova, the first girl I interviewed in my office four thousand miles from home, turned out to be a Vassar graduate in the class of 1947. Many of the others have lived in America when their fathers have been on some government mission. One girl has spent eighteen of her twenty-two years there, since her father works with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Another studied ten years in an American school at Teheran, when her father had a position with a branch of the Skoda works. Still another began her study of the language by talking with an R.A.F. flier whom her uncle was hiding. But the one with the strongest American accent acquired it in Tokyo. Mariana Bartakova, whose father is a Methodist minister, went to high school in Shiner, Texas, where there is a large Czech community. Dagmar Eisnerova, who has translated Poe's 'Raven,' is very well read also in Russian and French, and hopes to get a position teaching languages in the college at Richmond, Virginia.

The boys are in a two-to-one minority, as would be likely in a literature course in an American state university. Vladimir Kosina has had a scholarship for a year at Hiram College, Ohio, and wants to write his doctor's thesis on the theme of war in American literature. The most interesting of these first conversations was with Stanislav Rejsek, one of the few who is young enough not to have had his education interrupted by the Nazis. He is primarily a student of philosophy, deep in Plato, and was startled to find how little of a philosopher Emerson is. His greatest interest in American thought so far is through Tom Paine, and he described the American Revolution as 'one of the most wonderful movements.'

The last interview, at the end of a long afternoon, was with a Jewish girl whose education has had to follow the fortunes of our time. She was born in Germany in the mid-nineteen-twenties, lived in France for seven years until 1940, then escaped to America, where she studied at Columbia and where her father still teaches philosophy at the new Roosevelt College in Chicago. She came back to Paris last winter and fell in love with and married a young Czech writer who was studying there. She is almost as new to Prague as I am.

(When one of these students read a paper on *Walden* and its position as an American book, she stressed such things as Thoreau's simplicity and practicality, his optimism and his extreme Protestantism. That got us into a discussion of American individualism, and of Thoreau's statement of his political philosophy in his essay on Civil Disobedience. Although that essay sprang out of Thoreau's refusal to pay his poll-tax, as a protest against the slave-interests for waging the imperialist war against Mexico, I couldn't help feeling that Thoreau's defiance of the state must seem very innocent to those who had known the Nazis. These students had experienced something very different from the time and place where an Emerson could get his friend out of jail after one night. If you had made Thoreau's gesture, not in a New England village with a broad and still largely unsettled continent stretching westward beyond you, but in the hemmed-in Prague of 1939, you would have gone to a concentration camp and probably death. Nevertheless, the group took Thoreau's ideas seriously, and picked out in particular the sentences which dwell on the necessity for the just state to respect the minority and the rights of the individual conscience.

Then one of the girls passed around an issue of *Life* magazine. Among the glossy pages devoted primarily to displaying the fall fashions, there were some pictures in technicolor of Walden Pond, to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of Thoreau's building of his cabin. We all laughed at the clashing contrast between the tastes displayed in this magazine and any generalization about American simplicity. I was struck once again with the difficulty of finding generalizations to fit a society now crammed with contradictions almost to the point of explosion.

(A students' election is a serious matter here, since the elected council has far more responsibility than in an American college. This extends beyond managing the big hostels to a consultative role in forming university policies. Indeed, in the new School of Education, established after the Revolution, the students have a representative on the faculty board. The radical wing is pressing for similar representation on the more traditional

faculties, a demand that must outrage any academic stuffed-vest or vested interest.

On the evening when the balloting for this year took place in the division of the arts, fifteen hundred students were packed into the hall of Unity Hostel. First there were speeches by Dean Kozak and by Dr. Albert Prazak, the professor of Czech literature who is greatly revered as the man who organized the underground and was its key-figure at the moment when the Nazis were overthrown. He has since suffered a stroke, which has left one side of his face and body partly paralyzed, and he spoke in a very low voice. But he was no less insistent than the Dean in urging the students not to vote mechanically by parties, but to think and choose for themselves. This seems to be the chief weakness of Czech politics on every level, that party considerations tend to dominate everything else. But each of the parties is, at least, based on a political philosophy, on principles that it wants to have prevail.

During the hours of campaign speeches and excited counter-statements, it became clear that the students had aligned themselves into two main groups, left and right: a so-called Socialist bloc, made up of the Social Democrats and Communists, and a so-called Democratic bloc, made up of the National Socialists and the People's Party. The left was militantly left, but the right did not seem to be very far to the right, though vociferously nationalist. The division, according to Petr, was mainly on the basis of economic status, between boys and girls of working-class families, on the one hand, and those of the middle class, on the other.

The Dean stayed until after midnight, but the voting did not take place until four in the morning. The result was almost a tie, eight candidates elected from each bloc, with the chairman, a Social Democrat, holding the balance.

(¶ The memorial concert for Karel Hasler demonstrated how a small country, centering on one city, can possess a special kind of cultural unity. His songs have been familiar ever since the decade before the First World War, several of them sentimental love songs. But one of them is called 'Prague, the Heart of Europe,' and many resound with the word *svoboda* (freedom). Going around the country with his guitar, he had been a popular

symbol in the struggle against the Austrian Empire, and had once had to save himself by swimming across a river with his guitar on his head. And so, after twenty years of freedom, when the Nazis seized the country, they naturally forbade the singing of his songs—an edict wholly impossible to enforce.

In this concert they were sung by some younger members of the opera companies, by a chorus of school children (who stayed up far too late for the occasion), by an amateur quartet made up of a doctor, a teacher, a leather dealer, and a businessman. But by far the most effective rendering was by two older singers, a stocky man of sixty-five, who had been a friend of Hasler's and a master of comic roles for the opera, and a now florid lady of Polish background, for whom Hasler might well have composed some of the love songs, and who had reappeared from retirement for this evening. These two hit the right kind of informal cabaret tone and brought out the full warmth of Hasler's melody.

Hasler had continued to go around with his guitar, in the teeth of the Nazis' edict, until they arrested him in the fall of 1941. He was sixty-two, and hardly up to the strain of working in the quarry of a concentration camp. Then he was kicked in the shin by a guard, and the sore became infected. But the prisoners were not supposed to stay in bed, so one morning in December he was dragged out as a malingeringer, bound on a sawhorse, and left under a cold shower. By the time one of his friends found him, some hours later, there was no chance that he would live. But he had previously smuggled out a last song, with the refrain: 'Say good-bye to my friends in Prague.'

After the concert Petr and his girl took me to one of the best wine-taverns. This again would have no exact equivalent at home. The wine was excellent, but the place had none of the metal-hard chic that most of our big-city bars try to achieve. It was even more different from the cheerful noisy hilarity of a Saturday night beer-joint. The atmosphere in this unstained pine-paneled room was much more relaxed. People were talking quietly, since they did not have to shout above the sounds of either an orchestra or a juke-box—though there was one man with a guitar. Petr told me that the Nazis had forbidden not only Hasler's songs, but all Czech singing.

Yet the people would gather in these wine-taverns, after closing hours, and keep up their spirits with the songs of their country.

([Edwin Muir, who is in charge of the British Institute here, asked me to an informal lecture by Herbert Read. These Institutes, which the British have recently been establishing throughout the world, are channels for cultural interchange for which we have no parallel, and which we might well emulate. In Czechoslovakia, for example, they have set up excellent English libraries in Brno and Bratislava as well as in Prague, and they bring on tour a succession of distinguished speakers. They spend approximately seven times as much money as we put into the work of our cultural attaché. They certainly provide as many times as much valuable information about Great Britain. This neglect, on our part, seems very short-sighted when you remember that there are a million and a half citizens of Czechoslovak descent in the United States, and hardly any in Great Britain. The situation is similar in nearly every other European country.]

Herbert Read developed his theory of education. His main contention is that the traditional system is far too intellectual and abstract, that younger children especially should be given much more training of their emotions, that there should be a return to something like Plato's conception of harmony, to evoking creative impulses from within the child. Several questions crossed my mind: Can you evoke inner harmony without having an adequate conception of the relation of the individual to society? Don't you otherwise isolate the creative impulse as something apart from or even opposed to the group, and inculcate a false separation of the individual from society? Don't we have to undo the mistakes of our anarchic nineteenth century and—as the best American progressive schools are doing—conceive again of inner freedom as something gained, not in isolation, but through an enriching sense of co-operation?

At the end of Read's talk the man directly in front of me raised almost these same questions, with vigor and eloquence. As the meeting broke up I introduced myself and learned that he was Jiri Weis, one of the younger film producers. He had escaped to England when the Nazis came into Prague, and had served with the

British army as a correspondent. (I subsequently heard that all the other members of his Jewish family, eight in all, had been seized and murdered.)

He was very curious about America, and asked me to come out to Barrandov, to visit his studio. Barrandov, though small by Hollywood standards, is one of the best-equipped centers on the whole continent of Europe for making pictures. The Czech Film Industry, now nationalized, is proud that its picture, *The Siren*, just won the first prize at the international exposition in Venice. This picture would seem to be typical of the current aims of the planning board of producers, who decide together what subjects and themes will be treated, and how best to fill the quota of thirty pictures a year set by the Two Year Plan. *The Siren* presents an historical record of the miserable lives of the coal miners at the end of the nineteenth century, during a long strike at Kladno. The strike finally burst into a riot against the overlord and the pillage of his mansion, which was followed by the utter defeat and slaughter of the rioters. Some of the acting is a little amateurish, and the pace at times is slow, but the documentary portrayal of the mining town is rich in imaginative transitions from shots of the workers' homes to shots of the massive machines that dominate them. And the plant siren, intruding always insistently with its strident summons, makes a powerful central symbol.

The picture on which Jiri Weis was working is called *The Bridge*. It is based on the fact that a bridge in a present-day small town is too narrow and is causing accidents. Jiri wants the picture to give a cross-section of the social problems in the town by means of the varied reactions to a plan to construct a new and wider road. This road would necessitate tearing down the dry-goods store on the corner, and its proprietor is naturally opposed. It would break into the garden of an aristocratic mansion, and its owners are also opposed. But luckless people are still being killed on the present bridge. The progressive forces in the town finally carry the victory for the new road.

I watched them shoot a scene near the beginning. It was in the dry-goods store. A shabby little man who has just been run over by a truck is carried in. The proprietor is full of sympathy, and pulls down a bolt of cloth from his shelves to serve as a pillow. But then

he notices that blood is trickling from the dying man's mouth, and instinctively snatches away the cloth and substitutes a wad of cheaper stuff. The gesture is not underlined too heavily, and symbolizes excellently the kind of tension that will develop.

During the many trials and errors of the rehearsal the little man had to be lugged in like a sack and dumped, over and over again, on the floor, and let the fruit juice, which he had patiently held in his mouth, trickle slowly out onto the cloth. He was a type of Czech I had already seen in the taverns: dark and slight and wiry, with a long nose and scraggly teeth, and quizzical humorous gray eyes.

The first time the fruit juice spread out on the blue and white polka-dotted cloth one of the assistants started to cut that piece off. There was an immediate shriek from some of the women. Jiri explained to me the source of the consternation: cloth, like everything else, must be saved here, and somebody will make a dress out of this bolt after the picture is done.

The contrast with Hollywood in all the rest of the procedure was just as striking. There is a minimum of film available. A producer is allowed to take only three exposures of each sequence, and he has to make the best he can out of those. There is none of the hundred-fold American waste. The total budget will run to about \$160,000. The actors, most of whom work concurrently at one of the theaters in Prague, may be paid perhaps 10,000 crowns a month—about \$200—and the producer receives between 50,000 and 100,000 crowns for a whole picture.

¶ There was a simple ceremony last evening, November 6, in the Old Town Square, to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Soviet Revolution. The meeting took place between six and seven, so that workers could attend on their way home. The crowded Square was illuminated by arc lights above the speakers' stand, against the wall of the Town Hall. Many of the people brought improvised pitch torches with them. Some delegations had come marching with flags, big flags of the Czechoslovak Republic and the Soviet Union held aloft side by side. They caught the light brilliantly as they undulated across the two-hundred-yard width of the Square.

The main speakers were Jozka David, secretary of the National Socialists and chairman of the National Assembly, and Klement Gottwald, the Communist Prime Minister. Mr. David, an elderly man with gray hair, moved the crowd to continual enthusiasm by his account of how the Revolution of 1917 had inaugurated the greatest advance in social progress of our century. As Mr. Gottwald spoke, a thin drizzling rain began to fall, and glistened on his black hair and his stocky neck and shoulders. The Prime Minister, who started out his career as a carpenter, and went on to organize his union, delivered his address in the monotonous unemphasized tones of the usual trade-union speaker. All his references to Stalin brought great applause, and those to Benes even greater.

(Jarka's classmate, Zdenek Stribrny, invited me to Sunday dinner at his home in a village twenty miles from Prague. We started out on a bus early in the morning, since the expedition was also to include a trip to a medieval castle where Hus had lived, and some hours at the river town of Melnik, famous for its wine. We reached Zdenek's house a little after nine, and were sat down at once to large breaded pork chops and stewed apricots, to tide us over until dinner. Zdenek's father is the local carpenter and undertaker, and his shop is joined to the house by a court that is also a small farmyard. He is a thickset man in his mid-fifties, who was busy building a coffin for a funeral that afternoon. He made a joke about being in his working clothes on Sunday as a part of the Two Year Plan.

We went out to do our sight-seeing, drank some mellow white wine, and returned for our mid-afternoon dinner of roast goose and cabbage and dumplings. Mr. Stribrny was now wearing the striped trousers and black coat of the undertaker, but his work for the day was done. He was eager to hear as much as he could about America, particularly since a boyhood friend had settled in Detroit. Though we had to rely entirely upon the interpretation of Zdenek, Mr. Stribrny's broad-mouthed generous smile instantly established a warm current of communication between us. He had been much impressed by the fact that in an American automobile plant a foreman like his friend could afford to buy a week-end camp across the river in Canada. But he wanted to know why more working-

class men weren't elected to Congress. And he was astonished by what he had read of the Taft-Hartley bill. He also asked, out of what background of reading I couldn't guess, why the United States hadn't opposed the Fascists in Argentina? When I went out to the big kitchen to wash for dinner, he stood beside me and held the towel while I dried my hands. There was not a trace of subservience in this unexpected act. It was a gesture of the purest and most dignified hospitality.

After dinner, Mr. Stribrny's other son, who is good with his hands and will inherit the family shop, played on his guitar. He played everything from Russian folk songs to a curious version of boogie-woogie. His father seemed amused, but listened with an air of intense pride while Zdenek was talking about the essay he is writing on Shakespeare's influence on Pushkin.

Zdenek's mother and aunt insisted on giving us a supper of heaped-up plates of cold sliced sausage with dark bread and beer. When we were leaving for the bus, Mr. Stribrny made a little speech in which he told me not to be worried about what was happening now in America—in another ten years it would be as progressive a country as Czechoslovakia.

(¶ There is great eagerness to hear about America, even on the part of the extreme left, which might be presumed to be hostile. The Socialist Academy asked me to talk about American democracy to an audience of five or six hundred. I tried to give shape to so broad a subject by posing it in terms of the four freedoms, and the degree to which we were now achieving in practice those ideals of freedom of speech and worship, freedom from want and fear. After the speech had been translated by an interpreter, a stream of written questions then poured up to the platform. There was time to deal with only a fraction of them before the official end of the two-hour meeting, and I asked the chairman to say that I would be glad to speak individually with anyone whose question had not yet been answered. Nearly a hundred people came up around the platform, and when the janitor finally turned off the lights, about forty of us adjourned to a beer hall and continued the discussion until that, too, was closed.

The group was composed mainly of younger trade unionists and

intellectuals. The majority of them were Communists, but very few were trying to score points. On the contrary, they were thirsty for information. Some wanted the most elementary facts, such as what are the differences between the Democrats and the Republicans?—a question that takes some explaining now in a country accustomed to political parties based on fundamental ideological differences. Some questions revealed that the Communist papers had made it as hard for their readers to know what was really happening in the United States as our big business press does in the case of Eastern Europe. One man, for instance, had the notion that Tom Paine's works could not be bought in America. Another, who was enthusiastic about the Prague production of *Deep Are the Roots*, asked whether the play had been suppressed in New York? Still another wanted to know whether I might be summoned before the Un-American Activities Committee for criticizing the Taft-Hartley bill?

The questioners covered a lot of ground before the evening ended. How much can American labor express its will in the government of the state? How much more class-conscious will the American worker become? What are the reasons for the decline of Roosevelt's policies, both abroad and at home? How many of the American people want to co-operate with Russia? (This question I found impossible to generalize about. I said that during the war American and Russian soldiers had apparently liked each other and got on well. And, as to the future, despite the present crisis, statesmen who are capable of thinking responsibly must know that another world war would destroy civilization.)

Could you name any U.S. newspaper which represents the ideas of the majority of U.S. citizens? How is it possible that there are racial problems in the U.S.A., while in the U.S.S.R. sixty nations and races live in peace? (I emphasized that the original importation of Negro slaves was a primary injustice from which we have not yet recovered, and which has almost poisoned life in the deep South. But we made some progress even in the South during the New Deal; and some progress in the other parts of the country, on anti-Semitism. Though many very dangerous areas of prejudice and discrimination remain, we too can claim to be a country of peoples from many nations who have settled down to try to live together.)

Are there special health leaves for workers in the U.S.A.? Are American students interested in European art? Can there be in America a university professor lecturing on Marxism who is himself a real Marxist? (One could hardly point to many examples.) Does the average American consider military intervention by the U.S.A. in Greece and Turkey to be democratic? (I wished that I could be sure that the answer to that one was No.)

The question that will probably stay in my mind longest was one written out in English: 'Professor, you said we should not underestimate the will of millions of Americans to continue the fight for democracy. What chance but have they in the face of the well-organised machinery of big capital with military and state apparatus working towards a clash with the U.S.S.R.? What difference do you see in events in the past, the role of the single citizen, when in Germany before Hitler, in Czechoslovakia before Munich, the real democrat was helpless even if backed by democratic political parties? How less influence has the citizen in U.S.A. entirely unbacked by organised left-wing political parties!'

(¶ When I got back to my hotel that night I saw, in the Paris edition of the *New York Herald Tribune*, an article headed 'The Creeping Terror in Prague.' During the preceding forty-eight hours I had talked with people in both the city and the country, with students and professors at the University, with Mr. Stribrny (who, as a small proprietor, votes with the National Socialists), and with this group of diverse radicals. I had watched faces in the bus, in the Sunday crowd in the wine-tavern at Melnik, on the streets of Prague, and in the audience at my lecture. Impressions of terror are, of course, subjective, and it is often a case of who is looking for what. But I have been in cities where an atmosphere, perhaps not of terror, but of extreme anxiety, was so pervasive that you sensed it everywhere. You could feel it, say, in Boston the day the banks were closed in the winter of 1933. You could feel it in Gallup, New Mexico, in the pit of the depression, when two hundred Mexicans had been arrested for the murder of the sheriff, and the local vigilantes, their guns much in evidence, were still patrolling the streets. There it was terror, unmistakable.

I was in Berlin in the summer of 1938. Whispered dread met you

at every corner, in furtive questions from taxi drivers and chambermaids, in the few conversations that friends would permit themselves behind closed doors. That same summer, shortly before Czechoslovakia was betrayed by the Western powers at Munich, the atmosphere in Moscow was very different. But with all the Russians' pride in their accomplishments, and notwithstanding all the persuasive proofs of it, there was a suppressed sense of strain. The Russians did have their great new factories and apartment buildings, their socialized hospitals, the big reading room and open-air ballet at the Gorki Park of Culture and Rest, a huge number of scientific and artistic classics on sale in the bookstores at minimal prices. But in spite of all these and many other signs of social progress, it was nevertheless the period after the purge trials, and one was constantly aware of reticence and anxiety in the way Soviet writers and officials met and talked with a foreigner. One could not escape at such moments the sensed fear of a secret police lurking somewhere unseen.

I have felt nothing at all like that during this much longer stay in Prague. Several people have expressed their dislike of some of the Communists' tactics, and their anxiety lest the Czech party should adopt some of the more ruthless methods of the Russian party. But this is normal political anxiety, of the same sort as that with which the Social Democrats and Communists view the current recrudescence in Slovakia of a few of the reactionary Catholics who supported Father Tiso's Fascist movement. By normal political anxiety I mean the kind of feeling with which I would regard the election of a reactionary Republican as President, or with which most of my Republican Yale friends managed to survive the New Deal. This has nothing to do with 'creeping terror.' And at no moment here have I seen the tell-tale gesture that indicates dread, the dropped voice or the glance over the shoulder. Everyone to whom I have put political questions has given me free and critical answers, whether in government offices or crowded restaurants or open discussion meetings.

There is no doubt that Czechoslovakia faces very grave issues ahead, as we all do all over the world, as an inevitable result of the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. Here in Czechoslovakia it is not an abstract issue of East against West,

or of the opposition of two great powers widely separated by seas and continents. It is the question of a country about the size of Pennsylvania being situated between Germany and Russia. A favorite joke here is that Czechoslovakia is sick of being called 'the bridge between East and West,' since a bridge is something everyone walks over. However, the Czechs are uniquely fitted in their minds and by their experience to mediate between Eastern and Western values. They share with the Russians a common Slavic stock, and they owe primarily to the Soviet armies their liberation in 1945. The Germans have always been for them the oppressors. But they have traditionally reached beyond Germany to France, England, and America; and before 1938 Paris certainly was the cultural capital of their world. But they will not soon forget their betrayal by Daladier. In their eyes France was more culpable than Britain, since France was bound by explicit treaty to defend them against invasion. And they have not forgotten that neither the Soviet Union nor the United States was responsible for the shameful deal at Munich.

There is no ground here for hostility against us, unless it is of our own making. The crucial question is the degree to which Americans in their present mood are capable of understanding what is happening throughout Europe. Joseph Alsop, in his one week-end in Prague, followed up his article on 'the creeping terror' with another called 'Pattern for Gloom,' in which he spoke repeatedly of the threatened loss of Czech freedom. But he gave no indication that he could conceive what the British Labour Government believes no less strongly than the Czechs—that essential freedom is not at all dependent upon the current American notion of free enterprise. Alsop, when he was a Harvard undergraduate in the early nineteen-thirties, was an enthusiastic supporter of Rohrbach, the Republican state boss of Connecticut. Alsop is of course very bright, and he had seemed to advance in his political thinking after his distant cousin Franklin Roosevelt entered the White House. But the question is: How many shapers of American opinion, in which Alsop's column plays a small but typical role, are capable of realizing that their conceptions of freedom seem to an ever increasing number of Europeans hardly more than a luxury product, a verbalization of their comfortable vested position in the present

capitalist structure? How many are capable of realizing that to Czech National Socialists and Social Democrats, as well as to Communists, freedom is not merely the chance for anybody to do what he will with his own property? Freedom can be gained and protected only by groups functioning together, with their sense of social responsibility as highly developed as their sense of individual privilege. That is what I understand by the definition of freedom as the recognition of necessity.

([While writing these last paragraphs I suddenly remembered a conversation with Hugh Wilson, our ambassador to Berlin, in late August of 1938. Wilson was a man of some means who became a career diplomat out of a sense of public service. He had worked hard and done well. But he still carried the air of the New York Yale Club with him, the air of good squash and good bridge and the right Republican contacts. His solid honesty could not make up for the serious blind spots in his vision. He said that Hitler had done much for the economic rehabilitation of the German people, and that he would go down in history as one of the great men of our time—if only he could keep the peace. And I didn't think that a few hundred thousand dissatisfied Sudeten Germans were worth breaking the peace for, did I?

I would not pretend to prophesy what lies ahead now for the Czech people. There will be increasing pressures upon them from both sides. Remnants of Father Tiso's movement who have fled from Slovakia may pose abroad as persecuted patriots, along with the leaders of Catholic peasant parties from other countries. If then, in retaliation, the Communists force repressive measures, the refugees may be joined by other and more moderate dissidents. If left to itself, Czechoslovakia gives every sign of being able to maintain its own hard-won balance. But it will not be left to itself, and it may have to suffer severely from the present aggression between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.

But two political impressions are uppermost in my mind. First, on every hand this fall I have seen indications that representatives from all the parties are committed in good will to the effective functioning of the present National Front government, in which each party is represented in the cabinet in proportion to its voting

strength. That would seem to argue that you can work peacefully towards socialism in a country from which the great inequalities of industrial and finance capitalism have been removed. And second, whatever disaster may overtake the Czechoslovak Republic in the event of an open break between the great powers, I am convinced that there is as deep-seated and ineradicable a devotion to freedom among the descendants of Hus and Comenius and Masaryk as there is among those of Wyclif and Roger Williams and Wilson.*

* In the light of the events of late February, Alsop would appear to have been right. Terror was sensed then on the streets of Prague. But by then Alsop was saying that Jan Masaryk, 'the salon favorite in New York,' had, by going with the Left, 'played perhaps the most morally shabby game of all.' And it still seems to me that our newspapers, writing with such exaggeration and lack of understanding, bear a grave responsibility for having increased the tension between East and West. In a very real sense they have helped to bring on such pressures from the Communists as were felt in Prague.

I do not believe that my two main political impressions will prove in the end to have been falsified. Before I went to Czechoslovakia, it had already been consigned by most of the American press to a position behind 'the iron curtain.' Since I found this not to be true while I was there, I see no reason to suppose that in the long run the Czechs' disciplined good sense will fail to demonstrate the compatibility between socialism and freedom. Intimidating interference with the press and the universities is equally repellent from the Left or from the Right. To the degree that it has happened in Czechoslovakia it will bear serious consequences. It would not have happened if Czechoslovakia had not been caught in the crossfire between East and West, and if the Communists had not felt that they were backed by the Soviet Union.

But one must also remember that the new government was brought into existence by the people of Czechoslovakia themselves, not by the Russians. The right-wing Cabinet Ministers resigned on the immediate issue of the Minister of the Interior's having appointed some additional Communists to the police force. President Benes supported Prime Minister Gottwald. At that point the Communist-led 'action committees' insisted on a purging of the Right and on the elimination from the government of anyone not in full support of the Two-Year Plan. I have now received several letters from friends in Prague—including National Socialists and Social Democrats as well as Communists. They all emphasize the fact that the new cabinet still contains representatives from all the former parties, including a Catholic priest. No matter how much some of them may deplore the tactics of force, they all emphasize that the new government possesses the confidence of the mass of the people. For this government has undertaken further nationaliza-

tion of their resources, and therefore represents, particularly to the trade unions and the farmers, a further advance towards socialism. This is the crucial issue for the Czech people. For them the Truman Doctrine is a weapon aimed at the heart of socialism.

In trying to place events in perspective, we must not forget the long history of the Czechs' devotion to freedom. We can understand what is happening there only to the extent that we continue to observe what the Czech people themselves are thinking. My friend Petr Koubek has written. 'You certainly have read about the Social Democratic Party which is to dissolve and all of its members become members of the Communist Party. It is not new to you that the aim of the two parties has been the same, only under the old conditions the methods used were different. Now, since the conditions have changed there is no need of splitting the strength, but, as the reverse, by unity we will get forward quicker. No doubt, many things we have done or are doing now will need improvement. That is clear to all of us. But just the fact that we do realize this is something new and important. Nobody claims to possess all the wisdom and political experience. We shall have to cultivate this too and thus make people realize that they can help in the organization of the new society. . .

'Whenever I read a Western paper I have a feeling of discomfort, of touching something that is not clean enough. You probably know what I mean. I do not want to generalize, since sometimes the articles are written as criticism of a political opponent. Then I do not mind and I respect other people's views, but the articles where argumentation is based on lies, misinformation, or where the writer just picks up a few things to make the whole thing look gloomy and black, that makes me always think of the old proverb, "Do not condemn the sun because of a few black spots."

'It is true that our way of living will be absolutely different from the way you live, but as long as we shall be able to have respect for the basic human rights everything will be all right. The future will show where progress was made, whether in the countries under the Marshall Plan or in Eastern Europe.'

The opera singer, Geza Fischer, and his wife, whom I had met in Salzburg the evening that he gave a concert at Leopoldskron, gave me a warm welcome. We sat around the table after lunch in their apartment, and I suddenly realized that everyone there had been either under arrest or in the underground. There was Jarmila Kriestenova, the young soprano, who had also sung for us this summer. Her fiancé had been murdered in a concentration camp. She herself had fought with the Partisans, and she said proudly that her great-grandfather had done the same in the uprisings of 1848. Irene Fischer, who is partly Jewish, had divorced her husband to protect him, as soon as the Nazis came in. She had later been sent to a camp in Poland, where both her father and mother had died. When Geza Fischer, who had worked with the underground, got back to Brno with the liberating Russians, he found his apartment bombed out, with only one picture left hanging on a wall, a photograph of his wife. He had not known then whether she was alive or dead, but he took that picture as a good omen. She soon managed to return from Poland, and they were remarried. The picture, with a bullet hole through one corner, was hanging in their new dining room, where we had had our very gay meal.

Engineer J. M. Rasek, president of the local Anglo-American Club, had met me at the train, and arranged the organization of my visit. He is a plant entomologist, in charge of insect control in Moravia, and is interested also in game and fish. He had no obligations to be concerned with a professor of literature; but he had been in America twenty years ago, for advanced work in forestry at the University of Minnesota, and seems ever since to have constituted himself an enthusiastic unofficial greeter. He is, in fact, a very American type, and impressed me once again with how close our Middle West is to Central Europe. Through him I met several other men who had been in the States, on one business or another, including Engineer Jaromir Soucek, who faces the problem of reconstructing the eleven hundred bridges in Moravia which were destroyed by the Nazis. He had worked for three years in Chicago just before the depression, and had seen from his office window a double murder by the Capone gang. He was very impressed with the technical expertness: in the crowded street only the intended victims were hit. As he said that, he gave what I have come to

think of as the Czech smile, slow in forming, but then lingering around the corners of the lips.

In the company of Engineer Rasek, I also made the acquaintance of a new drink: a liqueur glass of *slivovice*, capped with a slice of lemon, with a high mound of powdered sugar piled on the lemon. The trick is to tilt it up without spilling the sugar on your chin or vest, and then let the *slivovice* filter through the lemon, which you chew up and swallow to give a delightful after-taste. After four or five of these one afternoon at his apartment, the Engineer fortunately set himself to brewing some coffee, which, as he said, should be as Talleyrand had described it: black as night, hot as hell, and sweet as love. (Final footnote on *slivovice*: in the Rector's office before my first lecture we had a formal toast, a sovereign remedy to be recommended to any other universities which may have a visiting lecturer on their hands.)

In Brno I went to two Dvorak operas which I had never heard before. One was *The Water Nymph*, which I liked for the simple melodiousness with which it evokes its folk-tale atmosphere. The other was *The Jacobin*, in which Geza Fischer gave a fine performance in the title role. *The Jacobin* was sung on the eve of November 17, the anniversary of the murder of Jan Opleta and nine other students by the Nazis, the event that inaugurated the closing of the universities in 1939. Opleta, a medical student in Prague, had been shot down on October 28. When the Nazis gave orders that Independence Day would not be observed that year, the whole body of students had stayed away from the University, and had instead put on their best clothes and strolled up and down Wenceslas Square. Nazi troops had been sent to disperse them. Opleta, who happened to be in the front row, got a bullet in the stomach, and died two weeks later. When the students banded together in a procession to his funeral, the Nazis arrested three thousand of them, and herded them out to the airport. There they put to death nine of the leaders in the presence of the others, and sent everyone else over twenty-one to concentration camps, and the rest to forced labor.

As a tribute to their memory, and because Jan Opleta had come from Brno, the theater was taken over that evening by the Association of Liberated Political Prisoners. Before the performance there

were speeches by Rector Neumann and Professor Loubol, the local head of the National Socialist Party. They both dwelt on the important role that students can play in affirming through action their political no less than their cultural ideals. This was a striking contrast with American university officials, who usually become very uneasy when their students engage in political action, go into rapid mental arithmetic about what effect it may have upon the trustees, and deprecate it when they do not forbid it.

The Jacobin made a fitting choice for this memorial, since it is an opera full of associations with recent Czech history. The plot is about a young Bohemian who had been in France at the time of the French Revolution, and has returned to his homeland imbued with republican ideals. He has been denounced to his father as a Jacobin, and is held in suspicion by his compatriots. Only at the end is he recognized as one who has his country's good deeply at heart. The scheming cousin who denounced him is named Adolph, which caused considerable difficulty for the Nazis, particularly at the line: 'Adolph, you bring injustice and violence.' The Gestapo gave orders to change the name to Albert, but the singers never could seem to remember. Then came the performance at Pilsen. When the Jacobin began the aria affirming how, through long years of exile and hardship, he has always been sustained by memories of the homeland, the audience quietly stood up. The Gestapo declared that this constituted a demonstration, and the opera was thereafter forbidden.

When Geza Fischer reached that song, the applause was deep and prolonged. It was impossible for a foreigner to imagine fully the accumulated feeling of that audience, most of whom had suffered far more than the Jacobin had.

After the performance I had supper with the Fischers, who took me to the overnight train back to Prague. In the meantime Irene and Jarmila were working out the details of a somewhat complicated arrangement by which I am to exchange nylons from America for a peasant-embroidered tablecloth from Moravia.

¶[At Prague the conference group has lost its shyness as it has gone on to discuss the major authors of our mid-nineteenth century. The term 'frontier' in its sense not of a

barrier between countries, but meaning the edge of an open expanse, was of great fascination to the group as they talked about the 'Song of the Open Road.' We read Poe and Whitman in successive weeks, in order to bring out their entirely contrasting views of the poet, the poet as craftsman and the poet as inspired seer. Nearly all our subsequent poets are divided by this contrast into the heirs of Whitman or of Poe.

The group was more familiar with Poe, but more interested in Whitman. Dagmar Eisnerova, who read an essay on the relation between Poe's theory and practice, has published her version of 'The Raven,' one of the eleven Czech translations. She gave an account of a meeting between several of the translators, one of whom emulated Poe's account of how he wrote the poem by an account of how he, the translator, had gone about translating it. Dagmar herself felt that she could bring the poem more intimately into Czech by substituting for Lenore the name of Jarmila, one of the women loved by Macha, the Bohemian romantic poet. To suggest the quality of 'Nevermore' she used instead *uratit cas* ('to stop time'), a phrase also richly associative through Macha's use of it.

The boy who had been disappointed by how far Emerson fell short of Plato gave a paper on *Drum Taps* as the fulfilment of Whitman's genius. But he himself had become so immersed in Plato's 'honey head' that he seemed a rhapsode celebrating Eros, with much feeling for Whitman, but only occasional mention of him. The quiet little girl who undertook the elucidation of *Democratic Vistas* made me feel once again the poignant division between Whitman's dream and the actual, in his vague and glowing conception of poets as the central figures in sustaining democracy.

(The first thing I noticed in Bratislava, driving in from the airport, was the somewhat listless air of the people on the streets: markedly unlike the confident step of Prague. Then nothing happened on schedule. The distance from Prague to this capital of Slovakia is about the same as from New York to Boston, yet communication seems to get all tangled up by what the Czechs call the Slovaks' 'inefficiency,' and the Slovaks shrug off with a reference to Prague's 'superiority complex.' We sat

around for several hours while representatives of the Ministries of Information and Education argued about which ministry had the honor or burden of guiding me.

One of my claimants started to plan interviews for me by asking: 'Who do you want to see, Democrats or Communists?' That question had not been asked in Prague or Brno. And when I said that I wanted to see members of all parties, my questioner was visibly surprised. The composition of the parties here is independent of that in Bohemia and Moravia, in accordance with Slovakia's new autonomy, and on first glance it might seem simpler, inasmuch as the Democratic Party gained 63 per cent of the votes at the 1946 election, and the Communists 31 per cent. The two other parties, which correspond approximately to the National Socialists and the Social Democrats in the Czech states, were not sufficiently organized to do more than divide the scattering remainder.

It took some time to find out exactly what the majority party stood for. While various emissaries drifted in and out of the hotel café, I picked up a good deal of random gossip. Some Communists asserted that the Democrats would accept anybody into membership for the sake of votes, no matter what their political record under the Nazis. Some Democrats countercharged (though never in the presence of Communists) that many collaborationists had joined the C.P. as the easiest way of getting cleared, and that many other people had signed up without conviction, purely for the sake of getting jobs. For a while it sounded just like listening to arguments about whether you had to be a Republican or a Democrat to get on at the Kittery Navy Yard, the opinion depending on whether it was a McCaffery or a Lathrop talking.

But in Bratislava it began to appear more involved, and I did encounter the lowered voice, the 'Be sure not to repeat this, please.' I also kept hearing, as I seldom have in Prague: 'Oh, if I could only get to America!' The chief difference at the present between the Czech and Slovak parts of the union seems to be largely the result of their contrasting histories during the war. The Slovaks, under the domination of their desire for autonomy, and led by Monsignor Tiso and his Catholic Party of National Unity, made their own peace with the Germans, and set up the Independent Slovakian State in 1939. The farce and tragedy of that 'independence' were

bitterly enacted, with German 'advisers' planted in every ministry, until the strong though unsuccessful people's uprising of the summer of 1944. But for five years, while the Czechs were enduring all the indignities of occupation, the Slovaks were being favored by Hitler as a 'model' state. Their economic resources were not being pillaged, and they enjoyed a substantial, if illusory, prosperity. Such a history has inevitably left behind some residue of unresolved Fascism.

The representative from the Ministry of Information, who was a professional soccer player before the war and escaped over the frontier to fight with the British army, finally ceded me to the representative from the Ministry of Education, a musicologist, who somehow kept on teaching during the war. By then they had, between them, arranged a far too abundant series of interviews. These began with copious statements of policy by leaders of both the major parties. But the most absorbing and longest session, running to a couple of hours, was with Laco Novomesky, the Communist Minister of Education, who is one of the best-known Slovak lyric poets. We had no language in common, and though only a fraction of a conversation can filter through an interpreter, you can have the curious sense—since you have so much more time to study the other person's eyes and mouth and gestures—that you are establishing a kind of close relationship after all. I liked what I saw of Novomesky very much: a man in his early forties, with forceful shoulders and hands, a broad sensitive mouth, and clear firm gray eyes. He didn't talk about general Communist aims, but dug directly into his specific job.

The school situation in Slovakia is as different from that in the Czech states as is the whole history of the two regions. Slovakia did not have a long line of educational reformers in the nineteenth century. She had been far more deeply ground down beneath the reactionary Hungarian yoke, which kept the peasants ignorant and which prevented, as far as possible, any development of Slovakian culture. The first Slovak university was not set up in Bratislava until 1919, and during the twenty years of the first Czechoslovak Republic there were still not nearly enough trained intellectual leaders to meet the needs of the new society. After six years of Nazi domination the situation now is even worse. The Ministry of

Education is trying to build from the ground up, and is concentrating at the outset on improving the schools in the villages, which are still very primitive.

Novomesky put most emphasis on his conviction that better teachers can be developed only as the teacher gains a position of greater dignity and importance in the economic community. At the end of our talk this Minister, who is credited even by his opponents with being devoted to the ideals of Communism, insisted earnestly that the Communists in Czechoslovakia did not want to be cut off from the West, and affirmed his belief that we could still learn much from each other.

I never did succeed in getting a wholly clear statement of what the Democratic Party wants. Its spokesmen were somewhat on the defensive, since two of its members of Parliament and their followers had recently been arrested for conspiring with some exiles to restore the independent Slovak state. It is easy to find out what the party stands against. It is against Communism. But it seems to suffer from the same internal weaknesses that afflict parties everywhere when they try to line themselves up, not progressively for something, but merely against something else.

The Democratic Party is definitely not socialist. The great majority of its members are Catholic, but many of its leaders are Protestant, and it consequently does not correspond exactly to the Czech People's Party. Its responsible leaders are outspoken against the separatist movement represented by the arrested MPs. But the fact remains that the party is now composed of a very unstable coalition of contradictory elements, some of them inclining toward the National Socialists, others veering in the direction of the pre-war Catholic Nationalist Party. Some clerical exponents at the University tried to insist that Tiso's group had really not been Nazis, only Slovak nationals. I can't see any real difference, the way things worked out in actual events.

The situation here is very complex, and it is difficult for an outsider to 'place' anyone in Slovak politics. This might be illustrated by Imrich Karvas, the economist who is now Dean of the Law School, with whom I had lunch and an afternoon. Under the puppet state he was director of the banks, yet at the same time he helped to organize the underground. After the defeat of the up-

rising of 1944, he was arrested by the Nazis and sent to a concentration camp in Italy. He has not yet recovered the ability to sleep, and looked very haggard and heavy. But he became animated at once when he began to discuss economics, and asserted proudly that Central Europe is still the central source for economic theory. He is not a Marxist, but a member of the Vienna school of 'finality,' which believes that it is completing Marxism by taking socialization for granted, and by shifting its emphasis from questions of cause and effect to questions of purpose and means.

Judgment of such a mind and career would depend a good deal upon where you stood yourself, and I gathered that he was viewed with some suspicion by both the right and the left. Even finding him at all was a wry illustration of the present confusion in Slovakia. It took an hour and a half, even though Bratislava is a city of less than two hundred thousand, and the chauffeur from the Ministry of Education knew the address. The trouble was that the names of many of the streets were changed once at the beginning of the first Republic, again by the puppet state, and still again at the liberation. In most cases the names were those of the politicians then most in vogue. At one time we were only a hundred yards away from the Dean's house—an hour before we got there—but neither the postman nor the policeman had ever heard of his street, though its name was quite unpolitical and would be translated as 'Under the Tatras.' We went back to the center of the city to check up with a directory, and ultimately arrived at his door. The street name was not new at all, but both the policeman and the postman *were*. Like nearly every other official in this still very uncertain city they seemed just to have been appointed.

The kind of intractable toughness that I have seen in Slovak workers in Pittsburgh and Bridgeport comes out in the fierce devotion of some Slovaks to their nationality above all else. Without this intense nationalism it would be incredible that a group of three and a half million people, in a territory less than a third the size of New England, would continue to produce fanatics who dream that Slovakia may set itself up as an independent state in the middle of the already overwhelming problems of Central Europe. The Slovak as well as the Czech followers of Masaryk (himself the son of a Czech father and a Slovak mother) knew that

the only hope for autonomy was through union. But at this moment there are Catholic National exiles in Rome and in America who are plotting a continuation of the Tiso regime. In the present situation they could be a source of grave danger to the Czechoslovak Republic. To the extent that they are supported by any groups in the West as a means of combatting Communism, that could in turn furnish a pretext to the Soviets to bring pressure upon Slovak internal affairs. Here lies the danger point of interference with the Republic's brave progress towards socialism. And it is important that Americans should know what are the factions and the stakes before they listen to any exile's voice.

(The most enjoyable parts of my visit to Slovakia were the trips out into the country, which Dr. Samko, the musicologist, arranged so that I could see some of the villages and watch the making of peasant pottery. It was like Ireland, the way everywhere we stopped there was somebody who had a sister in Uniontown or an uncle in South Bend. The houses have tile roofs and plaster walls. Most of the walls are a washed gray-blue, but some are ochre or light pink or apple-green, very lovely in the gray November afternoons, with a thin powdering of snow in the fields behind. In one of the villages we saw a wedding procession starting out from the bride's house to walk to the church, the bride and all the other women in simple white, the men stiff and awkward in their black suits, some of them with astrakhan hats against the cold.

At Modra, which produces some of the best-designed pottery, I met Dr. Petrik, the local Protestant minister. A man about forty, a graduate of the Theological Faculty of Bratislava, and fitted to have a higher position if he wanted it, he has chosen to work in this village. He appears to be greatly liked by the community. It was Saturday afternoon, and he was wearing a black and white flowered peasant shirt. He took me down into his cellar, where there were casks of the half-dozen different grades of white wine that his harvest of this year had yielded. I was made to sample them all, with solid sandwiches of pork and goose liver as ballast. A succession of his parishioners kept dropping in, and they all wanted to ask or tell him something. The one who stayed the longest was the butcher, who was also one of Dr. Petrik's deacons, though he hardly

looked it. He looked much more as though he might have been painted by Breughel, as he patted his vast belly to emphasize the difference between him and his thin brother who left thirty-five years ago for America, and is now a school janitor in Chicago. The butcher had been very puzzled by the Russians who had come into his house during the war. They had called him a bourgeois because he had a radio and because the chickens were in the yard instead of in the kitchen. If the village people, who were three-quarters of Slovakia, were bourgeois, who, he wanted to know, were the working class? He didn't really expect any answer, but went ahead speculating what he would have been like if he had joined that thin brother in the U.S.A. During the first war he had been in the army and had gotten as far away from home as Albania. From there America had apparently seemed just a step farther, but he had come home instead.

¶[After only three days back in Prague for lectures on Dreiser and Sherwood Anderson, a discussion of Hawthorne, and a talk on the American language for some Czechoslovakian Friends of the United States, I left for a visit to Budapest. The visit was at the invitation of the Hungarian Minister of Education, and was one more happy result of the Salzburg Seminar. Joseph Szentkiralyi had arranged all the details of this invitation, without which a visa could not at this time have been obtained.

Anything I set down here can have the value only of a quick first impression. I had not expected to go to Hungary when I left America, and I had made no effort to read up on its recent history as I had on that of Czechoslovakia. But once before I almost got to Budapest. That was when Russell Cheney and I were trying to see all the Vermeers. We had already seen those in the Netherlands, and in Paris and London. We planned to come over from Vienna for the one in the Hungarian National Gallery, but we finally didn't have time.

The Budapest into which I dropped now was a different world from that once luxurious tourists' city. And I certainly saw far more of its life than I ever could have merely as a tourist, since Joe Szentkiralyi had expended great energy to that end. He confided that when he had worked for the Hungarian Ministry of Informa-

tion he had always wanted to plan an official trip, and he had now drawn up an elaborate typewritten schedule. He assured me earnestly that he didn't want me to waste any of my time, and I felt as though we might have been in Chicago.

(On the plane down there had been another reminder of home. A little bespectacled red-faced lady from Texas, an indefatigable grandmother, was flying to Budapest to see her 'children.' That meant her daughter and her army son-in-law, who, she told me proudly, had been 'All-American' while at West Point. She had left Texas less than two weeks ago, but she had already taken in the wedding of Princess Elizabeth, with a chair in Westminster Abbey, even if it wasn't a gold one. Her other impressions of England seemed to consist largely of pity for a people who had to eat so much fish, but she thought well of what she had seen of Prague, overnight between planes, since her hotel had been 'real homey.' She was pleased to learn that I had been lecturing on American literature. But she was surprised that the Czechs would be interested in hearing about it, since she thought that people 'in this part of the world' were interested 'only in guns and things like that.'

She spoke not a word of any European language, but was not in the least daunted, and had obviously been having a fine time. I helped interpret for her at the customs, and had difficulty only in slowing down her declarations of how much money she had, so that I could translate the sums. The need to translate them also surprised her: 'I thought at least they'd be able to understand our money.'

After we had had our passports examined at Prague, at Bratislava, and at Budapest, she came out with an excellent American comment on the problems of Central Europe: 'Well, now, we've had to go through this three times, and we wouldn't be halfway across Texas.'

She told me how much she was looking forward to her first sight of the blue Danube, and I tried to suggest that it really wouldn't look exactly blue, but rather a kind of gray-brown. I needn't have had any misgivings. When we flew over it beyond Bratislava, she was perfectly satisfied. It was broad, and it reminded her of the Missouri at Kansas City.

¶ When we got into the city it was already dark. As Joe and I walked up the stairway to the apartment where I would be staying, I was startled by how cold it was. Then I saw the big hall windows against the evening sky. They were still riddled with shell holes. I was back in the shattered world that I hadn't seen since Austria.

It was Thanksgiving afternoon in America, and I went to a buffet supper, given for our Legation by our Minister, Selden Chapin. I ate cold turkey with about sixty friendly gregarious people, and had a very informing conversation with our press attaché, Lewis Revey. He possesses unusual equipment for his job; he is the grandson of an Hungarian, speaks the language fluently, and did graduate work in history at the University of Budapest for the last three years before the war. Behind the gay atmosphere of the party I sensed what I have sensed in every official American group I have run into since I landed at Frankfurt—the atmosphere of a bastion. Here in Hungary, of course, the struggle is more naked, since Hungary was fully occupied by the Russians. And though their army is no longer here in large numbers, nevertheless, until the Austrian treaty is signed, the Soviet Union has the right to maintain a connecting garrison line. There are many Russian soldiers and officers on the streets, and an estimated thirty thousand stationed outside the city. Their presence is a constant reminder that the minority Hungarian Communist Party, which polled slightly more than 20 per cent of the votes at last summer's election, has a far greater force to back it up.

For that first evening Joe had invited to his apartment a small group of his friends from the University and the Ministry of Education. I also met his wife and their two boys, the older of whom, about six, recited 'All the little raindrops,' a poem he had learned in English at school, but it was charmingly apparent that he didn't understand a word of what he was saying. These smiling kids had lived for two entire months in an air-raid shelter, throughout the siege of the winter of 1945 when the Russians finally blasted the Germans out of the city. Joe himself had become an expert at butchering horsemeat, and had been one of the organizers of the group of seventy or eighty people who huddled together in their single basement room. Fortunately they had a supply of quicklime,

and also a stove on the floor above, which they could cook on between bombing raids. They had all survived until the Russians liberated them, and also robbed them of their watches and any cash.

The conversation did not fall into the horror stories which some of the guests at our Legation had told, but it did tend to be uniformly grave. There was a younger professor of history, who is interested also in regional planning and had traveled in America just before the war. He began by asking: 'Do you think Europe is finished?', and then went on to say that he felt demoralization on every hand in Hungary, first as a result of the semi-Fascist dictatorship of Admiral Horthy, which, after the abortive revolution of Bela Kun, lasted the whole period between the wars, and then as a result of the German occupation. He said that there wasn't enough intelligent leadership now in the press or the other channels of cultural life, and that the students for the most part were untrained and distressingly listless. He finished, with a sad smile: 'Yes, I'm afraid Europe is finished.'

I woke up at three the next morning, faced with the problem of how to speak about American literature in such an atmosphere. I was scheduled to give two lectures in the University, the one on 'The Picture of Man in Recent American Literature,' the other on *Moby Dick*. Then Joe had suggested that the American-Hungarian Society would be specially interested in our realistic and naturalistic fiction of the last couple of decades. So I had planned a lecture centered around Sinclair Lewis and Dos Passos, as representative spokesmen for the 'twenties and 'thirties—with no clear spokesman for the 'forties even yet at hand.

But how could you establish a critical tone in a milieu which seemed hardly able to afford that luxury, where everything seemed to be either black or white? How in particular could I solidly make the point which has been hammering in my head all summer and fall, that the most healthy symptom of American culture is the insistence upon the difference between the official and the real? How could I hope to be understood, in a city packed with rival propagandas, if I said that the duty of the American intellectual was to resist and expose the limitations of all the propagandas of stream-lined mass production? In what context could I hope to place the much-needed satire of *Babbitt*, or the most eloquent

passage in *The Big Money*, 'They have clubbed us off the streets,' where for once the vague estheticism of Dos Passos' 'camera eye' became charged with a social conviction as he gave his uncompromising denunciation of the murderers of Sacco and Vanzetti? What a desperate comment it was upon the deterioration of society in the last twenty years to remember that injustice done to two men could then stir people throughout the world, which has since been drenched with the blood of injustice done to millions.

How could I possibly make clear what Dos Passos was talking about when he divided America into 'two worlds,' the world of 'the politicians the newspapereditors the old judges the small men with reputations the collegepresidents the wardheelers,' on the one hand, and the world of a militant people's democracy, on the other? Dos Passos himself apparently didn't believe it any more, since for almost a dozen years he hadn't written a novel with any social conviction. Well, I did believe it, even more strongly since I had been in Czechoslovakia, but how could I convey it in Budapest? On the one hand, Lewis' and Dos Passos' criticism of our business civilization would be seized upon by Communists as a blanket condemnation of America. On the other, those who had joined the American-Hungarian Society simply as anti-Communists and who hoped to hear that all was right with America would feel sadly betrayed.

At ten, in the Dean's office, I met some of the distinguished scholars of the University, and began to be reassured by the familiar. Dean Nicholas Zsiray was a philologist in the sister languages of Finnish and Hungarian. He had spent some years in Russia as a prisoner during the First World War, and become a Communist. But he was now most interested in talking about the Harvard Report on General Education, as something Hungarian universities might adopt to repair the breakdown of the cultural tradition in the schools during the Nazi occupation. Professor Lipot Fejer was an old, smiling, distinguished mathematician, who was proud that he had once lectured at Harvard. He wanted to be remembered to all his friends there, some of whom are long since dead. Professor Charles Lassovszky, whose sensitive friendly eyes looked as though they had triumphed over a great deal of suffering, was an astronomer who had worked with Harlow Shapley.

The big room in which I was to lecture still had black-out curtains in place of window panes, and the plaster of the walls and ceiling was peeling from the damp. The audience kept on their overcoats and the noise from the traffic in the street was insistent. There must have been about three hundred people, the majority of them poorly dressed students—a number which should refute any notion that Hungary is frozen into an anti-American attitude.

It is a strange experience to try to express your thoughts in a country where you have been for less than twenty-four hours, to an audience of complete strangers, whose language you don't know, and who know yours in varying degrees. But I stated, as clearly as I could, what I wanted to affirm. I spoke of what keeps us alive in America, in spite of all abominations: our lyrical as well as our satirical writers. I gave as one simple telling instance, *Winesburg, Ohio*, where, probing beneath the flat, starved surfaces that Lewis caricatured so effectively, Anderson found the still unspent sources of love. At the end I spoke directly to the students about their function today, to preserve the possibility of the rediscovery of man by keeping pure the channels of communication in a period when these are continually being poisoned by mass propaganda. And I emphasized that I was speaking about propaganda from any quarter, whether from the right or the left.

It was impossible to know how many people there understood what I was trying to say. But that's the problem of the lecturer anywhere. In fact, that's why selling bonds—as the older brother of one of my Yale friends once told me—gives you a far more immediate sense of results. After the lecture, along with the pleasant official congratulators, a boy came up wearing a scarf around his neck in place of the shirt he didn't have. He wanted to say that those were his ideas too, and that he thought they were very important ideas. And he thanked me for sharing in them.

¶ The next four days spun like the colors of a kaleidoscope. There were shop windows heaped with luxury products that I had thought no longer existed in Central Europe: antique silver, blue Meissen ware, rich brocades, and richer hors d'œuvres and pastries, all at prohibitive figures. A simple peasant-embroidered tablecloth was the same price as the monthly salary

of an assistant professor in the University. Antiques have come into the shops from landed families who have been dispossessed, but now only black-market profiteers could buy them. On every street corner were the traditional beggars of Europe, whom one does not see in Prague. And the many other ragged figures, going about their work in clouts instead of shoes, were reminders of the still sharp separation between the very few rich and the poor in a country whose revolutionary social change has hardly begun.

At the cocktail party at the Lassovszkys' an aristocratic atmosphere was preserved by the still charming custom of bowing to kiss the ladies' hands. The Rector of the University was there, Dr. Gyula Nemeth, an orientalist who has also been active in the Teachers Union. I also met Zoltan Bay, the nuclear physicist, and Sigmund Kisfaludy Strobl, the sculptor, whose portrait bust of Bernard Shaw is widely known. He has just crowned the hill of Buda with a war memorial to the Russians, a gigantic figure of a woman with upstretched arms, visible from all over the city. Some of the other guests told me that they resented its intrusion upon their familiar horizon, and one lady confided her hope that the statue's gesture meant that she was waving good-bye to the Russians.

I talked longest with Zoltan Baranyai, who had been Consul General in Chicago and had also spent considerable time in Geneva with the League of Nations. He is working on a book on the connections between language and politics, and was particularly interesting on the nineteenth-century emergence of folk speech in the countries of Northern Europe. He saw this as an important element in giving the people coherence and in enabling them to overthrow their oppressors. We discussed a little the two languages in America, the scrubbed English derived from the polite books and carried on by the genteel tradition, contrasted with the speech of the people, haphazard, colorful, vigorous, broken, and violent. Longfellow had practiced the one, and Whitman had stood up for the other. But it was probably only since 1918, with America's first appearance as a world power, that even professors had begun to be proud instead of apologetic about the resources of our native tongue.

The ladies spoke mostly in French, and more than one said: 'Don't let America desert us.' But what reality was there in such a hope for a country with hardly any democratic background of its

own, which had been led into support of Hitler by the dream of recovering all the lands lost to its neighbors, and whose big neighbor to the east now had its own views on what it meant by democracy?

The young professor I had met at Joe's raised the problem of freedom, the solution of which in America he tends to idealize. He was, for instance, very surprised to learn that in America too a minority party, in order to get on the ballot, must secure a list of signatures, and that strong pressures are often brought against such a party. He remembers his stay in the States as a happy dream. He was invited by students to visit their families in different parts of the country, and found so many 'simple, good people.' I asked him if there weren't also many such people in Hungary. He said, 'No, they are too corrupted.'

(Later that evening I met the local leaders of the International Student Service at a café, where we talked against the background of gypsy music. There were two members of the Small Holders Party, one Communist, and the president, a Social Democrat, who did most of the talking. They were like students anywhere else, most occupied just now with their hopes of having the big international meeting of their association in Budapest next summer to help celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the revolution of 1848. I asked the Communist why he was a Communist instead of a Social Democrat. He answered, very quietly: 'Because my father was a working-class man and suffered very much, and I want to make the revolution come as quickly as possible.' When I put this question to the Social Democrat, he was far more voluble on the matter of tactics, on how he held the same ends as the Communists, but believed that they must be achieved by other methods. The Small Holders contended that their party is more native to the present needs of Hungary, because the first reform to have been carried through since the war was the division of the big estates among the peasants. But the other two began to argue with them, and pointed out how disorganized and confused their party structure was, since it had dropped from more than 50 per cent of the votes at the first election after liberation to only a small fraction last summer.

The next day I had a glimpse of the odds against which these

boys fight in their effort to behave like normal students. I visited one of their smaller hostels, which was very different from the ordered if crowded efficiency of those in Prague. Here thirty or forty engineering and architectural students had taken over the fourth floor apartment of a building. The stairs had been smashed by a bomb, and were held up now by a none too solid-looking wooden prop. The students were sitting on the straw mattresses of their beds, with books or drawing boards in their laps. With six beds in each of the rooms, there was hardly space left for more than one table. Their chairman jumped up to show their prize room, the one that had panes in all the windows. I also saw the room with the stove, which they had not lighted yet this year, since the heap of wood that must take them through the winter would hardly last one week. They were already studying with all the clothes on them that they owned, and though it was raw and cold they said that the weather was particularly mild for late November. When severe winter sets in, it will be almost impossible for them to do sustained intellectual work in such a place.

¶[Contrasts between what seems and what is are often very confusing to a stranger. For instance, at the official dinner, my host Mr. George Alexits, the Secretary of State in the Ministry of Education, looked like the kind of gay *bon vivant* that you might meet in night society anywhere. Actually he is a long-time Communist, who was imprisoned more than once under Horthy, and sent to Buchenwald by the Germans. My host at the apartment, Mr. Eugene Kerpel, an essayist and lawyer and literary agent, is a more traditional figure, who described himself as an aristocratic anarchist, and who served wonderful breakfasts of coffee with whipped cream and white cake with raisins. He took me to meet some members of the P.E.N. Club in rooms that had once delighted Molnar, as well they might have, with their dark woodwork and portraits of famous Hungarian actors on the walls, and with a violin playing tender music half-heard from the café downstairs. I sat next to Dr. Andrej Gaspar, the translator of *Ulysses*, who would now like to try his hand at the *Faustus* that Thomas Mann has just completed.

¶[Going and coming in cars, and on foot whenever I could, I pieced together a visual image of the city. The bridges connecting the old city and castle hill of Buda with the newer city of Pest were all blown up by the Germans. Two have now been replaced by serviceable if ugly structures, but the famous suspension bridge designed in 1840 by the British engineer Tierney Clark still sags into the stream. The destruction is nothing like that of Munich, but thousands of houses were gutted by fire even after the liberation, since, with gas and electricity still cut off, the Russian soldiers often improvised lights of flaming tapers. The scene of greatest desolation is what used to be the most beautiful part of the city, the streets of renaissance and baroque palaces leading up to the castle hill. There the Germans holed up to the bitter end of the siege, and were driven out only by the fiercest house-to-house fighting. In front of the vast shell of the royal castle, which was later Horthy's residence, there is still just a heap of rubble. And looking out from there across the city, the most solid thing in sight is that towering memorial to the Russians, though it appears as banal and lifeless as most official monuments.

¶[I enjoyed especially an evening spent at the house of Lorand Dabasi-Schweng, after he had presided at the meeting of the American-Hungarian Society. He is an expert economist, who received part of his training in England, and is now Under-Secretary of State in the Ministry of Finance. He had gathered the kind of small and intimate dinner party of people with varied interests which, if lucky, I might be invited to in New York, though it was quite beyond the usual scope of Boston. His wife is a musician, and two of the guests were among her particular friends, a young composer and his wife. The two others were women both of whom had held important positions in the Ministry of Social Welfare (one of them, incidentally, had once studied at Vassar, the other at Smith). It was characteristic of the unofficial atmosphere into which I had at last dropped that I never got any of their names straight.

One of the ladies greeted me smilingly with: 'I suppose you've found that we have just two topics: how changed Budapest is, and how dreadful the Russians are.' But these people had many topics.

Except for the quiet composer, who was a Communist, the rest were liberals in the loose American sense, and the talk ranged from the London School of Economics to the popularity of Bartok in America, to my finding to my delight that my host was another of the admirers of Sarah Orne Jewett. These turn up in places far away from Kittery and York and the country of the pointed firs. The last one I found was in a Hollywood bungalow when Barry Fitzgerald had been describing his fondness for what he called 'good slow-paced prose,' and suddenly cited her stories as an instance.

We inevitably kept coming back to politics. The anxious state of mind of these Hungarians was more like that of my liberal friends at home than any I have encountered in Czechoslovakia. But the problem was the reverse of what it would now be in America, since liberals in Hungary are anxious about the left instead of the right. They did not talk with the intense strain that I had noted in some of the people at our Legation, and when I commented on that fact, one of the ladies said: 'Well, after all we've got to live here, and I long since settled down to being a cheerful pessimist.' She then went on with a lively story about a Siberian major who had moved in on her at the time of the liberation. He had told her, in a reversal of the usual pattern, that he would protect her against those unreliable Western Russians, that as long as he could sleep on the floor of her living room she would be safe from any looting. She was, and when he left he even refused the gift of her cigarette case.

This group had always thought of itself as liberal and they had all stood as far to the left as they dared under Horthy's regime. Now they are troubled at being called reactionary by the Communists. They did their best to give an unheated and unbiased picture of the situation. They agreed that the Communists have almost all the political leaders of real ability, and that these were trained in the Soviet Union, through long years of exile. Below the leadership they divided the present party membership into three categories: those who had joined out of idealistic devotion to the aim of building a workers' state—and this would include the composer, who was on the opposite side of the room and did not hear this part of the conversation; those who had joined—as many people join other political parties—for what they could get out of it; and

those who had joined to cover up their Fascist past. These last were the dangerous ones

The over-all tactics were becoming ever sharper, as the breach widened between East and West. The mass of the people are still far from being Communists, since 'the people' here means primarily Catholic peasants. They have never had, either under the monarchy or under Horthy, any real opportunity for responsible political action. Then there is the widespread sentiment of Hungarian nationalism which harbors no love for the Russians, whether as liberators or occupiers. But the Communists are militant and determined to transform a minority group, by tireless activity and by intimidation wherever necessary, into the majority will. The course they adopted against the Small Holders Party is symptomatic. They started by giving intensive publicity to the assertion that anyone who was in Hungarian politics at all during the Horthy regime must be a Fascist, a dictum which naturally involved nearly every politician except the exiled Communists. Faced with such a charge at every turn, the none too resourceful leaders of the Small Holders went down like nine-pins, and the leaders of the other opposition parties are now falling or fleeing into exile.

The two women who had worked for the Ministry of Social Welfare had refused an invitation to join the Communist Party, and had subsequently been relieved of their posts, with no further statement than that their services were no longer needed. But their tone was surprisingly without bitterness. They had no desire to go back to the old regime. They knew that it had been corrupt, and without progressive social aims. They insisted that even the present precarious conditions were better than that. But they were naturally worried, since they never knew who might now be considered 'politically unreliable' and picked up by the new secret police, with no public reasons given.

But then I asked, if one is not a Communist in Hungary today, what can he stand for progressively, with what group can he work with any sense of solidarity or hope of success? I got no hopeful answer. There were no other groups adequately organized. There were plenty of people, once again, who knew what they were against, but few who knew what they wanted with sufficient clarity to unite decisively to attain it. Here was a country still partly feudal,

with its big estates just now being divided up. There was no living experience of a democratic tradition that the Social Democrats, say, could build upon as they could in Prague. It wasn't enough, in answer to the question, 'If you're not a Communist, what can you stand *for*,' to say: 'I stand for Hungary.' For that could involve the old deluded dream of trying to get back all the lost territory. And even without that delusion, it hardly seemed a position defined coherently enough to be effective in the present crisis.

I rode away in a taxi with the somber feeling that now, a century after Kossuth's hopes for a union of Danubian States, the only likelihood of their realization would appear to be as Soviet Republics. At this stage that would be an enforced union for a country like Hungary which, for all these years, has still failed to make up its collective mind to any purposive social end. Such a union would be enforced by a naked practice of the doctrine that the end justifies the means, whereas one of the great moral truths that Trotzky reaffirmed cogently was that there cannot be any separation between means and ends, that only the means suitable to a socialist humanity will achieve socialism, that brutal means will always carry over into brutal ends. But the best political theory often gets severely strained and altered in practice. The inescapable fact remains that the states of the Danubian basin must unite if they are to survive, and the Soviet Union is the one union in sight. It knows what it wants, and brutalized as much of its practice may have been, it still points towards a goal that gives the dispossessed their only hope.

I was shaken out of such thoughts when the taxi leaped forward from a stop-light with unexpected speed. The old driver turned half around in apology, and pointed at two soldiers across the street. He murmured 'Russki,' and gave a wearied shrug of his shoulders which seemed meant to imply that sometimes the Russki were in the habit of taking over his cab for themselves.

¶ I finally saw the Vermeer on my last morning in Budapest. The only rooms in the National Gallery repaired enough to exhibit pictures were two on the ground floor. The collection then being shown was nineteenth-century French, among them a tiny Delacroix wash drawing of a white horse

tossing himself about with fantastic energy. I used to walk right by the big Delacroix in the Louvre, thinking them romantic exaggerations in a genre that meant nothing to me. But this bursting incandescent flame of pure vitality is what has made younger critics now repossess his value, as they repossess Berlioz and other once-outmoded romantics, and they have begun to teach me to see him with new eyes.

We had to rout out the storeroom keeper to get to the Vermeer, and while we waited the rain dripped through a hole in the plaster ceiling and splashed on the floor in front of a Cézanne still life. The storeroom keeper, who had the ferocious kind of black moustache that I've always thought proper for Hungarians, took us into a vast attic, with hundreds of canvases of all sizes stacked face against the walls. He claimed to know all his pictures by their frames, and I caught half glimpses of several treasures as he flipped them over to reach a frame that appeared to me to be too big. But this Vermeer, held up by its keeper at suitable wall height, turned out to be surprisingly big, a canvas in which, for once, the master of concentration experimented with some of the breadth of Rembrandt. It is of a woman in a black dress, as ugly as most of the women he painted. But though there is none of the iridescent pearly blue that is his unique signature, both the white collar and gloves and the gold wristlets and brooch have the same kind of lustrous texture. The gold is almost of the same color as the famous patch of yellow that Proust describes.

(I have written this account of Budapest, not with any notion that it is an objective estimate, but in an effort to give as honestly as possible my own subjective first experience. One disturbing fact has continually been in my mind. I had been talking to Joe about my colleagues at Prague, about Professor Vocadlo, who, as a well-known friend of both England and America, had been among the first to be seized by the Germans. Suddenly Joe said: 'That's what I'm afraid will happen to me.' I asked him what he meant. He answered that he was afraid that he had been denounced to the Communists as 'politically unreliable,' and that if he was to avoid arrest he and his family might soon have to leave the country.

No one can pick up in a few days the whole truth about a man's political life. And in times as involved and shifting as ours it is not easy to grasp all the implications of anyone's being branded a radical or a reactionary. But from what I could observe of Joe's mind in action at Salzburg and again at Budapest, I would consider him a solidly progressive socialist. He is not a Marxist, since he is a devout Catholic, active in the life of his parish; but he seems to recognize many of the truths in Marxism. And his essay on Dreiser certainly showed a deep feeling for social justice.

He was in the United States for the two years before Pearl Harbor, working at Columbia toward his doctor's thesis on Dickens in America. Then he was interned and sent back to Hungary early in 1942. During the war he was employed by the Ministry of Information, engaged in translating and in radio work. He was in charge of a broadcast in which Hungarians with relatives in America were allowed to send them messages. Joe insists that the program was not political but simply a channel, since the mails were stopped, for people to let their families know how they were. He saw to it that Jews were allowed to take part, though this was forbidden, and that's how he finally lost his job.

After the liberation, one of his fellow workers during the siege asked him to join the Communist Party, but he declined. He no longer had an opening at the Ministry of Information, and consequently supplemented his small salary as a teacher by some work for the American Legation. His most recent work has been translating into Hungarian the Legation's news bulletin, consisting largely of official statements by Truman, Marshall, and others. It is this activity that has caught him in the cross-fire between West and East.

He has obviously weighed the heavy problems of living in exile, and he has no dream-view of what his situation might be in America. He knows New York, and he knows that he might not be able to go on in teaching or scholarship, that he might have to take any kind of work that offered, to support his wife and boys. But he is husky and resourceful, and determined to pursue, if he can, a life that he believes to be just.

I may have missed some of the essential links in his story. We had to crowd all our talk into the short gaps between the many

engagements which, despite the shadow hovering over him, he had arranged out of a selfless desire that I should see as much of his city as I could. I detected in him no trace of dramatization or self-pity, and no wish that I should see only one side.

Here was the bitter evidence of what happens when any political group, right or left, works on the basis that anyone who is not entirely for it is against it, and that anyone who is against it must be purged. In Hungary it is the unavoidable problem of the serious thinker who is not a Communist. In America, it is the problem, not of the right but of the left. In America it may seem much less pressing, since it does not involve secret arrest. But, in every new opinion-test for a government position, or in every hysterical investigation by the Un-American Activities Committee, it confronts anyone who does not accept the economy of capitalist democracy as a final answer, anyone who insists that the two words do not belong necessarily together—that democracy existed before finance capitalism and can make revolutionary advances beyond it.

When Joe and I shook hands at the airport, we didn't know when we would meet again. It might be in America. It might be never.*

* He arrived in New York in the early spring.

Prague in December

—Copenhagen—and Home

¶ Coming back to Prague now seemed like coming home. As I walked along the side of the river under the Castle, I felt more than ever before the intense quietness. There are many fine modern Czech poets who work in the inward symbolist tradition, and most of them, including Halas and Holan and Nezval, have paid their tribute to the beauty of Prague, in all its lights and shades, under its first feathering of snow, or startled by that other whiteness (which I hope sometime to see) of the fruit blossoms on the slope of the Castle hill.

At the open air pottery market, in the riverside park by the Charles Bridge, I suddenly realized the image for this quietness. It was Rilke's quietness, particular and concrete but with deep hidden recesses. How much of Rilke's later poetry, written in Paris and Munich and Trieste, still owed its peculiar intensity to the fact that he had grown up in this devoted stillness of Prague?

¶ Jiri Voscovec, who lives in one of the old houses just beyond the market, says that poetry and painting are the arts now most alive here. He is much less encouraged by the theater, and as he talked it became clear that the problem is just the reverse of what it is in America. The range of the repertory, which so excited me the first day I looked at the billboards, has widened every week. Already this season, for instance, there have been five

different Shakespeare plays. But the productions are for the most part old-fashioned; and there simply aren't enough expert actors to stock so many theaters.

Voscovec contrasted the situation of the New York stage, where endless technical resources can be lavished on a production, even when the piece itself is shallow and trivial. It was the old contrast between America and Europe, which has grown even more insistent since this last war. Americans have everything ingenuity can devise or money can buy, and we hardly know what we want to do with it. The split between drama and theater, between a living tradition of art and a show business interested only in the quick return, has certainly never been wider.

(¶ During my last weeks here I am having the chance, thanks to the Ministry of Information, to visit some of the artists' studios. My guide has been Jarmila Haukova, a young poet who has also published a translation of *The Waste Land* and is now discovering Emily Dickinson. The most modern group of painters call themselves the group of '42,' to emphasize that they found their direction in the very depth of the occupation, when they had to work partly under cover and entirely for themselves. There are at least half a dozen in the group, with many divergences between them. What holds them together is their sense of a common starting point and a common goal. Frantisek Gross and Frantisek Hudecek, whose work appealed to me especially, are both now in their late thirties, and at the start of their careers were considerably under the influence of French surrealism. But the direction they have now found is what they call *civilisme*. By this word they mean a return in subject matter to the actual world around them, primarily to the industrialized city and its inescapable force, whether for good or evil, upon all our lives.

It is altogether a different movement from the Soviet social realism. Even though most of the painters I talked with are Communists, they were thoroughly critical of the unimaginative limitations of most current Russian painting. There had been a big Soviet exhibition in Prague a few months before, and the Communist critics had been no less outspoken than the others in declaring that these oversimplified poster-like representations of happy workers

in a field or mill were not what the Czechs meant by art. (Such so-called socialist realism is often very similar to the covers of *The Saturday Evening Post*, with their slickly folksy representation of the joys of the American way—another instance of the identity of official opposites.)

Hudecek has done a series of paintings and lithographs which he calls 'Night Walker.' They are complex and subtle variations of the movement suggested by a figure going away from you down the narrowing vista of a long city street. His interest has lain in breaking up and refracting the receding planes in order to convey a sense of immense pressures upon the figure as it moves through the dark silence. Gross' most ambitious work in progress is a big three-paneled treatment of the theme of war, inevitably affected by Picasso's 'Guernica,' but with its own rugged handling of abstract machines of desolation under a criss-cross pattern of searching lights.

He had just finished a smaller picture called 'City.' It also makes a very free recombination of machine forms, of cogwheels and conveyor belts and girders sprawling out from their buildings into a Square. The intention is apparently to suggest the violent chaotic power to which our age has given birth. But a broadbacked turbine heaves itself up into the dominating central space against a steel-gray sky, and its arms suggest powerful workers' arms, its red cap suggests a worker's cap. Except for that splash of red, the color of the rest is somber blues and black and olive drab, which combine to give the very kind of visual impression you get from some of the industrial quarters of Prague. The effect of the whole picture reinforced much of what I have begun to feel about Czechoslovakia. In the artist's combination of grimness and energy there is the suggestion of new life pulsating up from wreckage, as the workers set themselves to try to build a state that might save man from chaos.

When I went to Gross' studio I had no intention of buying a picture. But 'City' symbolized so much that I have come to admire in contemporary Czech culture that I wanted to have it on my wall in Boston as a steady reminder. Gross spoke only a little German, which he did not care for, and I have hardly progressed beyond a few fragments of restaurant Czech, but that served to ask him the price. He grinned and shrugged and finally refused to let me pay

him in crowns. Casual about business like many good artists, he told me to take the picture and to send him from America some books of reproductions that are not now obtainable without dollars, particularly Picasso and Klee and Mayan art. I was embarrassed by so generously offhand an arrangement—the canvas ought to have brought him at least six thousand crowns. Just then his five-year-old son came in with some green sprigged paper, looking for a piece of string. That gave Gross a chance to show me a water color that the boy had painted for his mother's Christmas. He displayed this picture, a slanting row of bright houses under a vivid blue sun, with all the pride that he had not permitted himself to betray for his own work. He seemed to consider the matter of my payment settled, and I could only smile my gratitude and say good-bye.

(¶ The signs of Christmas have begun to increase rapidly, since there is a preliminary celebration for the children on St. Nicholas' own day, December 6. The Saint himself comes around, accompanied by a lovely Angel and a sinister black Devil who switches the naughty children with his tail until the Angel intercedes, if the children are sorry, and persuades St. Nicholas to give them presents after all. The windows of the famous Prague toy stores are now packed deep with eager faces, and the displays certainly deserve them. One of the favorites is an array of lead figures of the Wild West: Indians and their tepees, settlers with six-shooters blazing from both hands, a covered wagon crossing a ford lined with buffalo and bears—and a pair of alligators for good measure.

In the Old Town Square there has sprung up a whole clump of fir trees surrounding a full-sized gingerbread house. There is a black cloth cat on the roof and a witch who opens and closes her jaws in a menacing fashion as she thrusts her head out of one of the upper windows, the panes of which are a spectral blue at night. This forbidding apparition draws hundreds of incipient little Hansels and Gretels to stand and stare, safe in the white rabbit fur coats and hats which are a charmingly widespread token of Prague's winter.

Several store windows are also displaying the flags of the four chief allies in the recent war, with the Czech flag in the middle.

In how many other countries this Christmas would the red flag and the Stars and Stripes still be held together in hope for peace and good will?

¶ Jiri Hajek, one of the ablest younger leaders among the Social Democrats, asked me to speak to the Workers' Academy on 'Progressive Forces in America Today.' The audience was a compact group of fifty or sixty trade unionists and university intellectuals, who are being trained to conduct classes in workers' education. They met in the study-room of the Jack London Club. As Petr and I came in, there on the wall immediately facing us was a placard, fresh white letters on a red ground: *Proletari Vsech Zemi Spojte Se!* I could guess after the first word—it must be: 'Workers of the World, Unite!' In these surroundings this was no mere slogan, spent from mechanical repetition or corroded by cynicism. Its words were alive once more with the warm blood of urgency and challenge. Across the hall were other words which Petr translated: 'To Think, To Learn, and To Fight.' Behind the platform was a photograph of Jack London with his own statement: 'I was born in the working class.'

Hajek explained how Jack London had become a local hero in Prague. It seemed to date chiefly from the depression of the early 'thirties—from which incidentally Czechoslovakia emerged far more quickly than we did. But for some years jobs were hard to land, and many younger Czechs had found in Jack London a symbol both of socialism and of outdoor adventure. Many of them made their own answer to the call of the wild by camping out in the Bohemian mountain country as cheaply as they could, and picking up casual lumbering or farm work. And though much of London's socialism must now seem romantic, the members of the club still seem happy to honor his American name.

I began my talk by saying that people in Czechoslovakia were for the moment more aware of our reactionary than our progressive forces. They had read about our anti-labor legislation, our Un-American Activities Committee, our military aid to the rightist governments of Greece and Turkey. But we in America were in a trough of postwar regression. It seemed to be our fate at moments of victory to lose our guiding vision, as we had lost that of Lincoln,

of Wilson, and now of Roosevelt. We were floundering without a clear sense of direction.

The hardest thing for Czechs to understand about our politics was that, unlike theirs, our major parties were not grounded on clear-cut ideologies. The Republicans and Democrats could at this point hardly be differentiated as conservative and liberal, but simply as rival groups struggling for power. Our minority parties looked far weaker now than they had after the First World War. Our official Socialists had lost much of their following when several of their reforms had been put into partial effect by the New Deal. They had lost even more by giving so much of their time—in a way the Czech Social Democrats had avoided—to fighting against the Communists instead of for Socialism. The Communists, after a history of almost thirty years, had shown no power to grow, and their membership of seventy-five thousand still constituted no more than a twentieth of one per cent of the population. That would seem to argue, despite the frenzied temper of red-baiting, that the grounds of their appeal were hardly fitted to the actualities of American development.

I was admittedly simplifying a complex picture, but the main lines were distinct, and distinctly different from Europe. Some of the differences had become clearer to me since I had been in Czechoslovakia, thinking about its history. They were traceable in part to what had been absent from the American background: we had had no feudalism, no nobility, no vested landowners, no traditional overlords to be overthrown. We had started our national history fresh with the Declaration of Independence. And even though we were still far from living up to its doctrine of equality, there it was as an unspent challenge. That helped account for why Marx's analysis of the class structure of Europe had never quite seemed to fit America.

The differences were also due to what was overwhelmingly present in our foreground. A whole continent with vast resources had made us the richest country in the world, and had given us, in good times, the highest living standard. But we were also subject, through lack of adequate social controls, to staggering depressions. And finance capitalism had brought a widening separation between the few rich and the mass of the people.

This was where we now stood, the fact to be reckoned with in measuring any progressive forces. Since the rise of our big cities we had become more aware of the meaning of a proletariat. But any advance towards socialism in America would also have its roots deep in our own equalitarian inheritance. That was why, despite our present ominous hysteria, with the world's richest country apparently the most unstable and fearful, our long-run hope lay in the proved strength of our democratic tradition. It lay in such things as the power of the Bill of Rights to protect the individual against injustice from the State. Our civil liberties had been one of the greatest achievements of Anglo-American law, and they stood now as a bulwark against the kind of totalitarian aggression that could invade a man's house and deliver him up to a secret political police. But even as I spoke, I was aware of dangerous inroads upon that tradition. Wire-tapping by the FBI and secret methods for dismissing workers from government jobs were both designed to enforce conformity by intimidation.

Whatever the long run, we had a short-run battle on our hands, and we would do well to assess the forces on our side. The one big hope, without which all others would fail, lay in the labor movement. This was the moment when the militant younger men who had come up through a decade of the CIO should be proving their allegiances. In the PAC we had seemed to make a real start towards a labor party with a mass base, but our current instability could now be read in the wavering and confusion of its aims. A career like Walter Reuther's was symptomatic of our dilemma. It began to look doubtful whether he would live up to the real socialist beliefs of his father, more likely that in his thirst for personal power, he would forget Debs and Jack London, and rise from the working class, not with it. We would have continuing sources of social health in such magnificent developments as the TVA, and in the far-reaching aims of our wisest atomic physicists, like Einstein and Oppenheimer. We also had the forces grouping around Henry Wallace.

Then I was asked the usual question, 'Who do you think will be the next President?' I said that I thought it would probably be a Republican, and if I had only one guess, I would say Eisenhower. But the principles for which Wallace is the spokesman, both for

co-operation abroad through the United Nations and for the increase of democracy at home, are the key-issues of our time and must not be allowed to go by default. I had decided to vote for Wallace, even if I had to write in his name on the ballot.

But, I concluded, the fact of the atom bomb was ever present. There we were on the bare ground of the increasingly blind aggression between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. It did not help much to try to establish the major share of blame. If our press was irresponsibly reactionary, the Russian official pronouncements were hardly greater contributions to mutual understanding. And the blustering jargon of speeches like Vishinsky's, no matter how they were applauded in Moscow, made it only more difficult for Russia's friends in the United States to get any hearing.

It seems strange now to set down these topical details after they were spoken. But, as I had the privilege of telling the Workers' Academy, they make the background for the most lasting political conviction that I will carry home from Czechoslovakia. I have long been a socialist in theory. But except for two weeks in England on the way, my stay in Czechoslovakia has been my first experience of living in a country where the theory has been growing into practice. And I like the atmosphere. I like the feeling of walking along streets where there are few signs of wide separation between rich and poor. Czechoslovakia still has plenty of problems to be resolved, but the widespread serious devotion to those problems, without hysteria or gloom, gives a lift to the air. This country can play a role far beyond its size. If it can continue to advance into socialism, without the authoritarian coercions of the one-party state, it will have demonstrated the bases for possible fusion between the traditions of the East and the West.

(In my last lectures at the University I spoke about the new poets who were least known in Prague. I had previously discussed some of the older generation, particularly Frost and Sandburg, in order to suggest the great differences between the poet of New England and the poet of the Middle West, the poet of the country and the poet of the city, the expert craftsman and the loose extender of the Whitman tradition. I omitted Eliot, since he is much read here, and Edwin Muir had devoted a whole course

to him only last spring. Beyond that, with the difficulty of getting books, not much is known here except names. I did not want to add any more to that abstract list, but to let the group experience a few poems directly for themselves.

Ransom's 'Philomela' seemed an excellent opener, since the sophisticated irony with which it states the problem of being an American poet could help to cut away any vestiges of the notion that our typical product from Tennessee must be the untutored bard. The only problem was that its deliberate counterpointing of the pedantic archaic phrase against the local and colloquial might be missed by listeners whose native tongue was not English. But even if they may not have grasped all the interplay between the Southern past and present which Ransom achieves through that device, they seemed delighted by his quietly inescapable wit.

They may have been a little bewildered (as the poet would have wanted them to be) by the opening lines of 'Bantams in Pine Woods':

Chieftain Iffucan of Azcan, in caftan
Of tan with henna hackles, Halt!

But after 'The Emperor of Ice Cream' they surely began to realize what Wallace Stevens meant by 'the essential gaudiness of poetry.' And in selections from 'The Man with the Blue Guitar,' their own knowledge of Picasso could illuminate the conception of how the artist achieves fresh reality only by breaking through the conventionally expected appearances. I told them that Stevens now at last receives the most valuable kind of tribute, the belief on the part of so many poets under thirty that he is the best living practitioner of their craft in America. As I read 'Sad Strains of a Gay Waltz,' I felt, even more fully than when I had first read it in the middle of the depression, that here in the contrast between a played-out tune and a new skeptical music which might spring from the very heart of our disbelief, lay one of the most resourceful 'ideas of order' for our broken time.

I regretted not including Marianne Moore, but her delicately dense observations depend so much less immediately upon music than Stevens' poems that they are hard to convey aloud to anyone who has never read them. And some of the class had said that they were especially eager to hear about the very newest poets, those who

had begun to be known only since the war. I hadn't realized before what an extraordinary contrast is provided by Karl Shapiro and Robert Lowell. Their differences in backgrounds suggest the variety that constitutes our richest possibility. Shapiro, the Jewish boy growing up in Baltimore during the depression years, picking up his education where he could, started to write poems while holding a minor job in a library. He was unknown to any readers beyond the little magazines when he was drafted, a year before Pearl Harbor. When he came back as a sergeant in the Medical Corps after three and a half years in the Pacific, his first two books had already won him all the available prizes, and he had passed overnight from one horn to the other of the dilemma of the American artist. Our artists often face a complete lack of attention, a condition which, even when it does not become disheartening and withering, hardly calls out the best work of which they are capable. Or sometimes they face the even greater danger of too sudden popularity, with its whipped-up blare of advertising, and find that they have to bend all their energy to keep from being destroyed, to search their way painfully back to the privacy out of which alone they can discover their next step ahead.

Lowell's public recognition has been a little less rapid, and out of a very different context. Of the same family as two other New England poets, he left Harvard because he found that it afforded a far less satisfactory literary education than he could acquire under Ransom at Kenyon. His first few poems seemed hardly more than over-ingenious exercises in the Eliot vein, but with the years of the war he found his own voice. His father was a high-ranking naval officer, but Lowell, having first registered for the draft, declared himself a conscientious objector at the time when the Allies followed Germany's lead in bombing civilian cities. He went to prison at Danbury, and, to judge from the dates of his published work, it was probably then that his conversion to Catholicism began to interpenetrate his imagination with both an opulent and a stark grandeur. It was a token of the tolerance sometimes possible in America—and I urged this as strongly as I could to any members of my audience who might be too narrowly trapped in their Marxist ideology—that a poet so obviously 'unpatriotic' had also won the Pulitzer prize.

The poems of Shapiro's I read were 'Drug Store,' 'The Geographers,' 'Nigger,' and 'Elegy for a Dead Soldier.' The first illustrated his desire to escape from loose generalizations about 'America'—the word that he has pronounced 'the chief enemy of modern poetry'—into concrete realization of immediate things near at hand and known. In his second book he had begun to experiment with a more popular style, feeling that this could be the necessary liberation for the too difficult utterance of our age. The rapid rhythms of his topical satires may sound at times a bit brassy, but they are very effective aloud. The great achievement of his 'Elegy' is the thoroughly honest portrait which Shapiro, the detached intellectual, gives of the ordinary GI, in all his animation and confidence, in his ignorance and cynicism and his most staggering limitation:

He hated other races, south or east,
And shoved them to the margin of his mind.

With unobtrusive eloquence this poem discloses the tension between the good and the bad qualities in our national character. In this mixed stuff of common experience we must struggle for whatever humane values we are to possess.

During these months abroad, when I have been trying to convey to Europeans my feelings about our living assets and liabilities, phrases from this elegy have kept springing to my mind. For instance, the soldier's blank incomprehension:

To him the red flag marked the sewer main,
is balanced against his sure possession:

Doors opened, and he recognized no class.

And the incipient brutality of:

He could recall the justice of the Colt,
Take interest in a gang-war like a game,

is held in some check by his natural warmth:

His laugh was real, his manners were home made.

Lowell's most impressive poem, 'The Quaker Graveyard at Nantucket,' was too long to read as a whole, and I did not want

to damage it by excerpts. It too is an elegy, for one of the poet's cousins drowned in naval service. It is not, like Shapiro's poem, a character portrayal, but a poem of the sea. Lowell's daring and violent images have an intensity which no other young poet has attempted since Hart Crane's death, and his evocations of Captain Ahab and the Pequod stand firm even in comparison with Melville's splendor. Lowell, of course, searches beyond the Quakers, and whereas Eliot found the spiritual center for his early poems in the Anglican metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century, Lowell has invoked not Donne or Marvell, but Catholic poets of a more flamboyant imagery.

The first poem that I read to show Lowell's break with earlier New England was 'Children of Light.' The title is ironic, since where the Puritans found their enkindling truth, he sees only somber darkness. If Shapiro senses the great odds we fight against in the unpreparedness of our national character to play a just international role, Lowell has apparently rejected our present society as hopelessly lost. His recurrent symbols are those of degradation and decay. In 'The Dead in Europe' and 'The Exile's Return,' he dwells on the terrible wreckage our age has wrought. In his Boston poems he evokes a city burning itself out in heavy corruption.

Since it fitted the season, I read last 'Christmas Eve Under Hooker's Statue.' The scene is the State House in Boston, where the memorial to the Civil War General looks down across the wind-swept wintry Common. Written during our war, it is a poem of private anguish in a hostile world, its only ray of comfort in the final line:

When Chancellorsville mowed down the volunteer,
'All wars are boyish,' Herman Melville said;
But we are old, our fields are running wild:
Till Christ again turn wanderer and child.

¶ In the final session of our discussion group, Vladimir Kosina raised the topic, 'What is there in *Moby Dick* that would not have been written by anyone except an American?' Several ideas were picked up from our earlier sessions: the author's immersion in everyday experience, the union of work and intellect that we had found in Thoreau, Whitman's kind of belief in the common

aim, in Anderson we find none, or better, what to Gide is only a means, or an incidental feature, is to Anderson an end in itself.'

But she ended on the theme of Anderson as 'a social writer, that is to say as a writer who helps to create society. Every social reform has to raise man first, otherwise it remains a dead theory. Therefore I should rank Anderson among those great individualists who, turning their highest attention upon the individual, make society not a compact body of nameless masses, but a sum of unique personalities, respecting the value and the right of self-fulfillment for each of them.'

(My last Sunday in Czechoslovakia Jarka and Zdenek and I made another trip into the country. This time we went to the village where Jarka's father spends most of his time, now that he can no longer see to work. The village is only a cluster of twenty-three houses, and we reached it by walking a couple of miles along upland pastures rising above the nearest railroad station.

Jarka's father can distinguish figures against the light, and came forward slowly to shake hands. He looked younger than the sixty that he is, with a wonderfully humorous workman's face accented by a very flat nose, jug ears, and many gold teeth.

The combined kitchen and living room was enlivened by blue and white pottery on the shelves. This time I was fully prepared to sit down, the moment we arrived, for a generous second breakfast of coffee cake powdered with sugar and stuffed with jam, and coffee with cream, which you can't buy now in the city. Jarka's mother is a stately placid woman, from whom he gets his own grave handsomeness. She was already deep in her preparations for dinner even before serving us breakfast, since, as Jarka explained, this was the first time she had ever entertained a foreigner. So we cleared out for a long walk through the woods, and as the first really heavy snowfall of the winter began to sift down through the fir trees, it reminded me of Sunday walks in Maine.

Zdenek and Jarka, who both attend the class at the Workers' Academy, outlined for me the role that as Social Democrats they think they can play now. They will co-operate with the Communists on specific issues, though criticizing constantly any methods of intimidation. By co-operating also, on the right, with the National

Socialists, they believe that they can keep that party hewing to a real socialist line. The alignment they would most fear would be between the more conservative businessmen and industrialists among the National Socialists and the more conservative big farmers among the People's Party. Such an alignment might try to turn the clock back, and might thus bring on more violent tactics from the Communists. But fear is a word hardly fitted to the tone of any of their talk. They resisted all the inroads upon their freedom before, and, if necessary, they will resist again.

([The cream sauce on the boiled fowl and dumplings would have been worth waiting many hours for. We also had apples and walnuts from Mr. Schejbal's trees. A lifelong worker, he can't bear to be inactive now, and is able to feel his way around his garden. He takes special pride in his cauliflowers and his fifty fruit trees. When he heard that I had a small vegetable patch at Kittery, he was eager to compare dates of planting on these two northern slopes.

Much of the time he sat and smiled at his son, and I wondered what was passing through his mind as Jarka reverted to English, and went into a long account of his enthusiasm for Thomas Wolfe. Jarka is working on an essay on loneliness in American fiction, and had been greatly impressed and disturbed by Wolfe's insistence upon the impossibility of establishing any permanence in New York. He cited a passage where Wolfe describes how the library shelves in a rich apartment try to create the air of permanence with their fine sets of Dickens and Balzac and Proust. The night may seem shut out. But Time does not stop.

([As the time to leave came nearer, I took more and more walks through the streets of Prague. To reach the Cathedral you have to pass through the entrance to the Castle, which completely surrounds it, and you go directly by the front door of President Benes. When he is in residence, the flag high on the roof tells that fact to the whole city. But this fall he was in the country much of the time, since he was not well. His long public service and the special strain of his years of exile, even longer during this last war than in the first, have begun to make inroads into his

store of tough energy. If his health should cause him to leave the presidency now, the national feeling of irreplaceable loss would be even stronger, I suspect, than that which our country experienced when Roosevelt died.

I made a final visit to the Cathedral on an afternoon when it had already begun to grow dark. The candles were throwing wavering lights on the gold-brown walls of the Chapel of Saint Wenceslas, which was filled with kneeling figures. Many of them had come in from the country, as you could tell by the elaborately embroidered skirts and the black fur jackets of the women. As I left through the outside courtyard, I paid my farewell respects to the exquisitely wrought thirteenth-century equestrian statue of Saint George. The slightly undersized Saint has a tense serious look, very like that of President Benes, as he deals the final blow upon his enemy the Dragon.

¶ The next days were taken up in a round of official leave-takings at the University and the various ministries. The one informal exception was an hour I had with Jan Masaryk, who had just come back from the stormy session of the United Nations in New York. The taxi swept across the river on the way up to the vast Czernin Palace, where the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is housed, and the line of baroque saints on the Charles Bridge looked even more imposing than before in their newly white robes of snow.

Mr. Masaryk always remembers that his mother was American, and talks off-the-record a highly colloquial language that is a relief after formal jargon. New York must have been relentlessly wearing upon the representative of Czechoslovakia, who had to watch the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union worsening hour by hour. But this Foreign Minister has kept his fondness for life. He seemed delighted that I had so much enjoyed his country. He had read in the *New York Herald Tribune* that he was 'a paunchy man who makes jokes.' Sure, he said, patting himself, there was his paunch for anyone to see. And how could a man hope to face the world these days if he could not laugh for relief?

There is no doubt about Mr. Masaryk's great popularity among the people as a whole. And though he commits himself to no party

and is often criticized from the left, even the Communists have granted that he is an astute and disciplined negotiator. Many observers of the Czech delegation to the United Nations have declared that, beginning with San Francisco, Mr. Masaryk and his colleagues have been the most resolute and most resourceful of all groups in the cause of international democracy.

[Towards the end of March I received the following letter from Zdenek Stribny:

'I think you might find it interesting to hear some news from the "new" Czechoslovakia. I suppose that you, as a good friend of our nation, are distressed and alarmed about our fate. Let me say, first of all, that we are all safe and sound and that we, after all, are far from despair. It is quite true that we have lost much in the last three weeks. If anybody were to have told me, a month ago, what we were going to lose, I should certainly have despaired. But strangely enough, I do not despair today, even if we have just taken leave of our Jan Masaryk.

'I will be perfectly frank: we have gone through a new social revolution; we have given up a good deal of democracy and individual freedom. But we have retained enough freedom for everybody to live and work either happily or contentedly, according to one's political views. And we have retained enough democracy for our state to leave it a possibility of developing into a new, more righteous and more moral democracy. We have learned in these days to look at things with harshly realistic eyes. By an uncontrolled terrible strength ensuing from the contrast of two opposite world ideologies, we were faced with facts which we had either to accept totally or reject totally. Every one of us had to do so. There was no other way.

'For many the decision was quite simple. I spoke in those days to some workers and learned, to my great surprise, that they didn't know anything about the *freedom of mind*. Years of struggle for mere bread have taught them to know only one freedom: *the economic freedom*. These people did not hesitate in the least how to decide. And they were very numerous and very resolute.

'For many the decision was painfully difficult. This was also the case of the intellectuals and of us students. Every student was shaken by the events to his roots. This is true also for the Communist students. I have discussed with them and they were as unhappy and as distressed as I was. But also for us there were only two ways: to deny a part of ourselves and go with the working class or to go against it. And so, in the cruel days of the end of February, we, progressive students, painfully aware of the fact that we were losing a part of our individual freedom, could not go with the right party students and call "Long live freedom" and, with the same breath, "Long live Petr Zenkl." We preferred to give up a part of our individual freedom to save the economic freedom for the whole nation. President Benes, with his utmost self-denial, showed us the way. We realized very well that

every opponent of Communism had to enlist, willy nilly, into the mercenary ranks of capitalism.

'By the way, those protesting students were not so many as you have probably been informed by your newspapers. They were about a thousand and a half, not twelve thousand! And they were not shot at by the police. One single student was hurt in his ankle by a rebounded bullet, not on purpose, as it seems.

'Also the Action Committees are certainly not so gruesome as they are described by the Western press. In the Central Action Committee sits also the Dean of our Faculty, Dr. Jan Kozak, Dr. Hromadka, the head of the Czech Brethren Church, and many other non-communists. In our faculty three professors and five docents were put on the retired list. None of really high standard or known to you. Also some few students—seven—were expelled. The English department is untouched. All the decisions of the Action Committees will be verified once more. Some new people are going to replace the old professors, among them Jiri Hajek. I think that even in this respect we did not betray President Masaryk's humanistic ideals.

'I ought to say still a few words about Jan Masaryk's death. Nobody can know his state of mind in the minute of suicide and it is improper to give one's own explanation for absolutely certain. It is also improper to try to win some political capital out of this tragic event. It would be far better to be silent and pitiful. But when I hear the Western radio giving its various explanations, I must tell you what is the opinion of many Czechs.

'Jan Masaryk, unlike his father, was more sensitive than rational. He liked very much our people, not as an abstract idea but as millions of individuals. He liked our working class and in the first days of our February revolution *spontaneously* went with them. His speeches from those days were very clear and very radical and, I must say, surprised many of us. His "I go with the people" and "With this new government I am going to govern with gusto" leave no doubt about their meaning. Then the crisis came. His reason told him that he went perhaps too far according to his previous political views. The revolution necessarily was accompanied by much profiteering and injustice which Masaryk loathed so much. Then came the anniversary of his father's birth and Masaryk had to read many letters of reproach and condemnation. Many of his friends, especially those from the West, did not try to understand him. They simply rejected him. And so, in a minute of great mental contradictions, he took to the fatal decision.

'This is how many Czechs explain Jan Masaryk's death. Maybe, we are not right. Nobody can assert it. We would prefer to mourn for him without speaking about his motives. But we cannot help feeling offended by those who comment upon his death by the words, "Too late, but still."

'I was told by Jarka that you are writing a book about your experiences in our country. I am eagerly looking forward to it. Nevertheless, I think that you ought to come to us very soon again and to write one more book

about Czechoslovakia. About Czechoslovakia suffering and yet not despairing, afflicted by evil and believing in good, limiting freedom and democracy for some only to give it back, revived and strengthened, to all. I think you would understand.']

¶ One of the night clerks at the hotel desk kept wondering how I would find things back in America. He had gone to New York in the mid-nineteen-thirties, and had worked as a bartender all over the country, the longest stretch at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco. He had been too old to be drafted, but with the end of the war and the Revolution, he had decided to come home. He had liked California a lot, but had decided that Czechoslovakia was a better democracy now. 'For instance,' he said, 'if a man is sick, he can get a good doctor, no matter whether he has money or not. And people are friendly, not like New York, where every guy is in a rush for himself.'

The younger elevator man knew only a few words of English. I always gave him my stamps for his little boy, and before I left he summoned up his resources and burst out: 'Professor, will there be another war?' He had fought with the Partisans in the Sudetenland, had been wounded in the shoulder and the thigh, and had had his wrist broken. His house had been smashed up. He had had more than enough war to last a lifetime, but now Czechoslovakia was in the middle again. What did I think? Did the people in America want war?

I told him, No, the people didn't want war. I hoped that even the reckless men who shouted in our papers about dropping atom bombs on Russia would be restrained by responsible military leaders who, whatever their politics, knew that you couldn't destroy the vast Soviet Union that way, that you could only wreck further the already broken economy of the world. No, I didn't think there would be a war. But I couldn't say it with enough conviction to suit him. He had already been deeply swayed by his silent thoughts. 'I'm afraid you're wrong, professor. I'm afraid there will be another war.'

¶ My colleagues at the University gave a farewell wine-supper at a fine old restaurant in a side street. Petr, in his joy in displaying the endless resources of his city, had taken

me to a different good place to eat nearly every night, but this was one I had not yet sampled for its fish soup and roast beef. The Dean was somewhat amused at the extent of my enthusiasm for Czechoslovakia, though we agreed that one of the great rewards of travel is to find that you can like things other than your own. For instance, during his years in America, he had discovered that a fluid and mixed political State, made up of many races, felt less strongly the bitter passions that had been engendered in Central Europe by the strictly national State.

We drank a last toast to my next visit to Prague. Jan and I had said good-bye the afternoon before, Jan looking very haggard now from the far too long hours required by his job. The following afternoon I said good-bye to Petr, and was on the plane for Copenhagen.

(I had wanted to go home by way of Copenhagen ever since the Danes at Salzburg had so generously adopted me as one of them. One of my ancestors was a whale fisherman from a little island off the Danish coast. When he died, at the end of the seventeenth century, it was carved on his tombstone that he had taken, 'incredibili successu, 373 balenas.' Some of his descendants had established a brewery in Copenhagen and others had settled in Slesvig-Holstein. From there my grandfather and his four older brothers had all decided to emigrate to America when opportunities shut down in Europe after the collapse of the revolutions of 1848. So I had had no family connections with Denmark for nearly a century, but was eager for a first view in that direction. I was only a little anxious, as I found myself met by four of the Salzburgians—Carl Adamsen, Golfred Appel, Bent Christensen, and Ejler Holm—lest they might invoke those ancestral brewers a little more seriously than I could live up to. But though we landed in the water-front bars before the end of the evening, Danish beer is not as strong as it once was, and *Schnapps* is now so expensive that we floated along serenely, in company that recalled to me other Scandinavians I had once met in a longshoremen's bar in Duluth.

At last it felt like being on a holiday, with my two European jobs behind me, even though I was to give a lecture at the University. I woke up the first morning to the relaxing sound of a slow *klop*

klop from the street. I pulled open the curtain, and there below was a steady procession, at less than five-minute intervals, of brightly painted red and blue wagons from the famous Carlsberg Brewery. These stout Belgian horses cart more than a million bottles a day, which makes a bottle apiece for every fourth man, woman, and child in all of Denmark, if you want to figure it that way.

Ejler Holm, who is finishing his graduate studies in history, had arranged a tour of the city. We also went out along the coast to the Castle of Elsinore, which Danes like to believe that Shakespeare really visited. In its renaissance magnificence, it even comes up to that breath-takenly beautiful opening scene on the battlements, as imagined, say, by Robert Edmond Jones.

¶ Danish ballet is excellent, with an animation and gaiety beyond any dancing I had seen in Prague. The feature of the evening, 'Slaraffenland,' was brilliant in its *décor* and inexhaustible in the novel devices by which it evoked that lovely land where there is pie in the sky, and birds fly into your mouth already roasted. This ballet seemed the most fitting possible entertainment after the dinner we had just eaten. Beginning with slabs of smoked salmon and ending with apple strudel with whipped cream and blue cheese, this dinner suggested that the Danes, even though they could not get their traditional rice for this Christmas, must be the best fed people in Europe now. As a cultural note and a tribute to Danish levelness of head, I also add that, after the last brandy, most of the other guests went off to listen to a lecture on the continuing subjunctive in the Slavic languages.

¶ The radical intellectuals I met through Golfred Appel wanted to hear also about Yugoslavia and Poland, and I was sorry that I had not yet been able to go to those countries. But all during the fall in Prague we had been hearing more and more confident reports from those peoples to the south and north, which indicated that their economic life was beginning to forge ahead as they saw more clearly what they wanted to do. Going there would be different from going to Czechoslovakia, since in neither Poland nor Yugoslavia had there been anything like a real demo-

cratic tradition. There one would want to discover the extent to which cultural freedoms are rising along with their new material progress.

(¶ One of the most absorbing conversations I had in Copenhagen was with Jens Rosenkjer, the Director of Education for the state-owned radio. He was laying plans for a series of overseas broadcasts, beamed for Americans of Danish descent, to tell them of new developments in the old country. This news made me feel even more strongly than before that we in the United States have now reached the stage in our multi-national culture when some really vital educational experiments could take full advantage of the richly diverse strains in our heritage. Our writers have realized for a long time now how much they owe not to England alone, but to the Continent as well. And our painters and musicians realize it of course far more. This historical consciousness should be broadened by every possible means. No minority group should be allowed to feel that it is 'on the wrong side of the tracks.' Each should be proud of the inherited culture from which it has grown and which it has brought in part to America. Our country has the greatest resources in the world to foster out of its own people this kind of internationalism at home.

The small blue-eyed, ruddy-faced taxi driver who took me to the modern radio office had a special air of gentleness, almost the unhurried gentleness of Mr. Rosenkjer. Gentleness in the American vocabulary usually implies softness or weakness. But this gentleness I speak of is allied with the firmest strength. It is what I had also felt in the old man in his Tyrolean jacket riding back on the Sunday excursion train to Salzburg. Europe has learned better than we have yet, out of much patient experience, that you can be virile without being hard-boiled.

(¶ The plane for America took off in the late afternoon by the northern route, and it happened also to be the shortest day of the year, so we had nearly eighteen hours of solid dark. The plane was only half full: returning businessmen and four or five employees of the airline company, on holiday leave. We stopped at Iceland at two in the morning, I had my first corn-

flakes in six months, and that, in our newest mode of travel, was all I had a chance to observe about Iceland.

¶ The taxi driver from the airport was the familiar Boston Irishman, but he suddenly seemed bigger than I had remembered. The lines around his eyes and mouth were more tightly drawn, and you could almost hear his nerves snap. I mentioned that I'd heard that our mayor was out of jail again, and the hunch of his shoulders was something different from any gesture I had seen in Europe: full of cynicism and contempt for all politicians, and yet so full of confident energy, no matter how overstrained, that he gave the impression that he would ride right over them, as his shiny new cab rode over the drifts up Beacon Hill.

I was home in time to hear the Christmas Eve carollers in Louisburg Square sing 'Good King Wenceslas,' which, unlike 'Roll out the Barrel,' is not of Czech origin, and is unknown in Prague. I was also home in time to find that, during my absence, many of my activities have now become 'subversive.' The Attorney General has apparently drawn up a 'list.' It includes nearly all the groups who have been militantly anti-Fascist ever since the rise of Hitler, who have honored the Abraham Lincoln brigade and have tried to help the Spanish refugees, who have defended labor's prisoners and the Negro and the foreign-born, who have supported the cause of a people's democracy, whether at home or in China or in Greece. I have believed in the work done by these groups, whether or not some of their members are Communists. I have been proud to belong to them.

I admit that my first night home I woke up in a sudden sweat of fear. I was no longer in the favored position of an observer in a foreign country. I was back in a very uncertain battle. Ever since the first atom bomb was dropped I have seldom been free of the sense that we are all living on the margin of disaster. But these six months of detachment from America have served to strengthen what I already believed in. I have a renewed sense of the responsibility of the intellectual—a word honored by William James and much scorned by Fascists—of the necessity for him to be as true as possible to what his experience has taught him, and to speak for those truths as fully and as fearlessly as he can. So far as American

politics are concerned, progressives can no longer allow themselves to be deflected into delaying actions, into supporting the lesser of two evils. If you believe in a democratic socialism, you must act accordingly, and work for it. Many of the positions you take will be the same as those taken by Communists, and you will of course be vilified for that. But however bad the odds, the final stakes are international co-operation or a war that will, at the very least, complete the destruction of Europe: the heart of our civilization.

New Year's Morning, 1948